United Nations A/69/PV.1

General Assembly
Sixty-ninth session

Official Records

1st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 16 September 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the session by the President of the General Assembly

The President: I declare open the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President: In accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure, I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Statement by the President

The President: Today I am pleased to address the General Assembly for the first time as President of the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I am deeply humbled and honoured by the trust Member States have bestowed upon me and my country, Uganda. I am convinced that together we, as Member States, will achieve a lot over the next 12 months in advancing the core values and principles of the United Nations for the betterment of the world and its peoples.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my predecessor, His Excellency Mr. John Ashe, who presided over the just-concluded sixty-eighth session of the Assembly. Mr. Ashe worked tirelessly to promote the work of the General Assembly. On behalf of all Member States, I convey our gratitude to him for his dedicated service. I wish in particular to thank him for setting the stage with the conclusion of intergovernmental processes, whose outcomes will provide key inputs for our work at this session. He also handed over to me a compendium with major activities undertaken in the past year, as a foundation on which to build in order to address outstanding issues.

I also thank the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his leadership, dedication and personal commitment to advancing the agenda of the Organization. I look forward to working closely with him, his team and the United Nations system as a whole.

The coming year will be a momentous time for the United Nations. We will commemorate the seventieth anniversary of its founding, the twentieth anniversary of the groundbreaking Fourth World Conference on Women, 15 years since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and 10 years since the 2005 World Summit.

It is evident that the sixty-ninth session will be very busy. In addition to dealing with the normal work of the Main Committees, we will be preoccupied with negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. The key inputs will be the outcomes of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, the recommendations from the Structured Dialogues on a Technology

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Facilitation Mechanism, as well as the forthcoming Secretary-General's synthesis report. We also have preparations for and negotiations on the outcome for the third International Conference on Financing for Development, which will be held in July 2015 in Addis Ababa, and the climate change negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

While we have a lot of hard work ahead of us, we also have a historic opportunity to formulate a post-2015 development agenda that is transformative, brings about tangible benefits, leads to improved livelihoods for all and contributes to achieving sustainable development in its social, economic and environmental dimensions.

It will also be our responsibility to ensure that adequate means are mobilized for implementing the agenda in terms of financing, technology development and transfer and capacity-building. That will require a strengthened global partnership for development and enhanced cooperation between and among Member States, the private sector, civil society and all other stakeholders. It will also require a fair trading regime and the promotion of domestic and foreign direct investment.

It is for that reason that I chose the theme for the general debate at the sixty-ninth session to be "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda". As I address representatives today in this newly opened, magnificent Assembly Hall, I cannot help but think that we are here at the dawn of a new day. Let us approach the pivotal sixty-ninth session with a sense of urgency, hope and greater cooperation. Let us seize the moment with a firm belief that a better tomorrow is within our reach.

The General Assembly remains the pre-eminent forum for global debate and cooperation among Member States. Let us use this unique environment as intended — to harness opportunities and to find solutions to the challenges confronting humankind. We can collectively make a significant contribution this year towards changing the world we live in for the better, not only for ourselves but for generations to come.

As I emphasized in my acceptance speech (see A/68/PV.93) in June, we must strive to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda is truly transformative, with the eradication of poverty and hunger and the promotion of sustained and inclusive economic growth as its overarching objectives. As we agreed in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development outcome document (resolution 66/288), entitled "The future we want", it should be holistic, action-oriented and universally acceptable, while also paying due attention to regional and national realities.

To that end, it is my intention to convene three high-level thematic debates and one high-level event. The main objective of the debates and event is to provide an opportunity for Member States and all the relevant stakeholders to have in-depth deliberations on the selected topics, in an interactive and participatory manner, with a view to making contributions to the process of formulating the post-2015 development agenda. I wish to stress that the debates and events will not pre-empt or prejudge the outcome of the intergovernmental negotiations.

The first high-level thematic debate, to be scheduled in February 2015, will be on the means of implementation for the post-2015 development agenda. Achieving sustainable development will require the mobilization and effective use of finances and technology development and transfer, as well as capacity-building. It will entail increased investments in social sectors, infrastructure, rural development, climate financing and the protection of global commons, to name but a few areas. The debate will focus on how to mobilize the significant resources that will be needed to turn the aspirations of the post-2015 development agenda into reality.

The second high-level thematic debate, to be held in March 2015, will focus on advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda. As highlighted in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288), although progress on gender equality has been made in some areas, the potential of women to engage in, contribute to and benefit from sustainable development has not yet been fully realized. In that connection, the debate will provide an opportunity to focus on measures that must be taken to advance gender equality and women's economic and political empowerment at all levels, as well as the importance of education in those endeavours.

The third high-level thematic debate, to be held in April or May 2015, will address the peaceful settlement of disputes and the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and regional

and subregional organizations. Over time, we have seen numerous examples of successful cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, particularly across my home continent, Africa. As I have stated before, such cooperation has yet to reach its full potential and must be substantially strengthened.

I also intend to convene, in June 2015, a high-level event on combating climate change, which is one of the defining global challenges of our time. To preserve planet Earth for ourselves and succeeding generations, the international community has an obligation to address the effects of climate change, which threaten humankind's very existence. It is important that, at this session, we give momentum and added impetus to efforts to reach a global agreement in 2015 under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In due course, I will provide details, including the specific dates and format, as well as the background and concept notes on each of the high-level thematic debates and events.

One of the priorities that I highlighted for this session is the continuing focus on the revitalization of the General Assembly and the reform of the Security Council. While some progress towards making the General Assembly more effective and efficient has been made, we need to do more. In that regard, I have requested the respective Chairpersons of the Committees to pay greater attention to that matter. The need to reform the Security Council is urgent, as reflected in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1). We need to find a way of making progress on the intergovernmental negotiation process, and I call upon Member States to redouble their efforts at this session.

As we open the sixty-ninth session, the international community faces an unprecedented array of weighty challenges. The list is as lengthy as it is daunting. It includes poverty and hunger, persistent unemployment, violent armed conflicts, faltering education systems, climate change and rising sea levels, and inadequate infrastructure, to mention a few.

In recent months, we have seen health systems overwhelmed in the face of new and dire threats, such as the Ebola virus, while new challenges to peace and security have emerged with alarming frequency, including a rise in polarization, extremism and terrorist activities.

To say that we are living in tumultuous times would seem an understatement. Yet, while the outlook may seem grim and the challenges daunting, we must not allow ourselves to be gripped by fear or despair. Together, with dedication, single-mindedness of purpose and compromise, we can achieve great things. As Martin Luther King, Jr., once said, "Everything that is done in the world is done by hope."

Let us take our hope and, as inspiration, our belief in a better future and tackle such formidable challenges with a sense of resolve and resilience over the next 12 months. Now more than ever before, the world needs harmony, unity, optimism and hope and all our nations and peoples united in peace and prosperity.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: It is a great honour to join all present for the official opening of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. Here in New York, autumn is in the air, but at United Nations Headquarters it feels like spring. We meet in the newly renovated General Assembly Hall to resolve anew our work to advance the values, principles and aspirations of the Charter of the United Nations. Whether autumn or spring, we come together to make this a season of progress.

I congratulate His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa once again as he takes up his duties as President at this important session. I have no doubt that, with his experience, wisdom and distinguished service as Foreign Minister of Uganda, he will lead this crucially important session of the General Assembly to great success. I very much look forward to working closely with him throughout the coming year, as we have already worked together. I also want to pay tribute to His Excellency Mr. John Ashe for his stewardship over the past tumultuous 12 months as President of the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

I am convinced that the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly could be the most consequential in a generation and for a generation. The coming year must be a time for action and for results. We have important tests before us and high expectations across the range of peace, development and human rights challenges. We begin in earnest this month with vital high-level meetings and gatherings to stem the existential threat of climate change, to advance the rights and opportunities of the world's indigenous peoples, to rally together to

improve the health of women and girls, to take on Ebola and to address the many peace and security challenges that now plague our world.

There is plenty of reason to be concerned about the state of the world, but also plenty of reason for hope. That hope starts here in this one-of-a-kind and wondrous Hall, where the world unites to solve challenges and to improve the lives of those who sent us here — "we the peoples". Let us resolve to act together to accelerate progress as the Millennium Development Goals enter their final stretch. Let us join forces to establish a set of sustainable development goals and a development agenda that can wipe out extreme poverty over the next 15 years. Let us commit to take on the climate change challenge and leave a cleaner and greener planet for posterity. Let us spare no effort to place human rights up front and to promote peace and security everywhere for everyone.

Our eyes must be open to the world and all its challenges. We see a rising tide of intolerance — of societies closing in on themselves — of groups eager to exploit differences and wage campaigns of hate.

The General Assembly stands as the ultimate rebuke to that distorted and venomous view of the world. Here we stand — nations united — to demonstrate that in our interconnected, ever-smaller interdependent world, the best way to solve problems is by working together in a more determined way than ever before.

By being here, you have shown your commitment to that twenty-first-century truth and command. Now let us prove it through principled and effective action. I am grateful for your leadership and commitment.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Item 135 of the provisional agenda

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/69/374)

The President: I would like, in keeping with established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/69/374. It contains a letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which he informs the Assembly that five Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I would like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years".

May I therefore take it that the General Assembly takes note of the information contained in document A/69/374?

It was so decided.

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Credentials of representatives to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly

(a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

The President: Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly at the beginning of each session shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

Accordingly, it is proposed that, for the sixty-ninth session, the Credentials Committee should consist of the following Member States: Brazil, China, Bangladesh, Denmark, Jamaica, Namibia, Senegal, the Russian Federation and the United States of America.

May I take it that the States that I have just mentioned are hereby appointed members of the Credentials Committee?

It was so decided.

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Organization of work of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly

Letter from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences (A/69/370)

The President: The Assembly will now turn its attention to document A/69/370, which contains a letter dated 2 September 2014 from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the President of the General Assembly. Members are aware that, pursuant to section 1, paragraph 7 of Assembly resolution 40/243, of 18 December 1985, no subsidiary

organ of the General Assembly should be permitted to meet at United Nations Headquarters during the main part of a regular session of the Assembly, unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

On the strict understanding that meetings would have to be accommodated within available facilities and services, authorization is thus sought for the following subsidiary organs: the Preparatory Committee for the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III); the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Ten-Year Review Conference on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action; the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations, the Specialized Agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency; the Board of Auditors; the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; the Disarmament Commission; the Independent Audit Advisory Committee; the Executive Board of United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; and the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to authorize these subsidiary organs of the Assembly to meet during the main part of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.

United Nations A/69/PV.2

General Assembly
Sixty-ninth session

Official Records

2nd plenary meeting
Friday, 19 September 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Item 7 of the provisional agenda (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

First report of the General Committee (A/69/250)

The President: May I invite the General Assembly to direct its attention to section I of the report of the General Committee. In that section, the General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraph 2.

May I request the General Assembly to now direct its attention to section II, entitled "Organization of the session", which contains a number of recommendations concerning the General Committee, the rationalization of work, the opening and closing dates for the session, the schedule of meetings, the general debate and the conduct of the meetings, and so on.

In paragraph 21, the General Committee draws to the attention of the Assembly the fact that the general debate will be held from Wednesday, 24 September, to Wednesday, 1 October, and recommends that it continue on Saturday, 27 September 2014. May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the information contained in paragraph 21 and approves the recommendation that the general debate continue on Saturday, 27 September 2014?

It was so decided.

The President: All other recommendations in section II of the report of the Committee concern established practice. Therefore, rather than going through them one by one, I believe it would be beneficial to address all those organizational matters concerning the General Assembly as a whole. There being no comments on that approach, we shall proceed accordingly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all the information that it is requested to take note of and to approve all the recommendations of the General Committee contained in section II of the report?

It was so decided.

The President: Having just adopted the recommendation in paragraph 19 on waiving the requirements of rules 67 and 108 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly to declare a meeting open, I should like to endorse the practical suggestion that has been made at previous sessions that each delegation designate someone to be present in the meeting rooms at the scheduled time.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information contained in paragraph 45 concerning the timely submission of draft proposals for the review of their programme budget implications?

It was so decided.

The President: May I now invite members to turn their attention to section III of the report, which deals

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with the adoption of the agenda. The question of the allocation of items will be dealt with subsequently in section IV.

In section III, the General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 53 to 58. In paragraph 59, in connection with sub-item (b) of item 13 of the draft agenda, entitled "Follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading A, entitled "Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 60, in connection with item 39 of the draft agenda, entitled "Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading B, entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security", on the understanding that there would be no consideration of the item by the General Assembly. May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 61, in connection with item 60 of the draft agenda, entitled "Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India", the General Committee decided to recommend that consideration of that item be deferred to the seventieth session of the General Assembly and that the item be included in the provisional agenda of that session. May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 62, in connection with sub-item (b) of item 95 of the draft agenda, entitled "No first placement of weapons in outer space", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading G, entitled "Disarmament". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 63, in connection with item 171 of the draft agenda, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Independent States", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I, entitled "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 64, in connection with item 172 of the draft agenda, entitled "Observer status for the Developing Eight Countries Organization for Economic Cooperation in the General Assembly", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I, entitled "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 65, in connection with item 173 of the draft agenda, entitled "Observer status for the Pacific Community in the General Assembly", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I, entitled "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 66, in connection with item 174 of the draft agenda, entitled "Seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War", the General Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I, entitled "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the agenda recommended by the General Committee in paragraph 67 of its report for adoption by the General Assembly, taking into account the decisions just adopted with respect to the draft agenda.

Bearing in mind that the agenda is organized under nine headings, we shall consider the inclusion of items under each heading as a whole. I should like to remind members once again that, at present, we are not discussing the substance of any item.

Items 1 and 2 have already been dealt with. We shall now turn to items 3 to 8. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the inclusion of the items listed under heading A, entitled "Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences". May I take it that the items listed under heading A are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to heading B, entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security". May I take it that the items listed under heading B are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

Mr. Mnatsakanyan (Armenia): This is the first time I have spoken in the General Assembly, and I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, although I would have preferred to be discussing a rather more substantive issue. I hope that when I do I will have an opportunity to congratulate you fully.

Meanwhile, I wish to state that the delegation of Armenia dissociates itself from the consensus on including item 38 in the agenda of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The President: Next, we turn to heading C, entitled "Development of Africa". May I take it that the item listed under this heading is included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Now we come to heading D, entitled "Promotion of human rights". May I take it that the items listed under heading D are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Heading E is entitled "Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts". May I take it that the item listed under this heading is included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to heading F, entitled "Promotion of justice and international law". May I take it that the items listed under heading F are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to heading G, entitled "Disarmament". May I take it that the items listed under this heading are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Heading H is entitled "Drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations". May I take it that the items listed under this heading are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly, we turn to heading I, entitled "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the items listed under heading I are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to section IV of the report of the General Committee, on the allocation of items.

The General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 68 to 70. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information contained in paragraph 70 concerning the granting of observer status?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 72 to 75. We shall take up the recommendations one by one. Before we proceed, may I remind members that the item numbers cited here refer to the agenda in paragraph 67 of the report before us, namely document A/69/250?

We shall now turn to paragraphs 72 (a) to (m), which relate to a number of plenary items. We turn first to paragraph 72 (d), which relates to sub-item (b) of item 13, entitled "Follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development". May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 72 (d)?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraph 72 (l), which relates to sub-item (y) of item 123, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Independent States". May I take it that

the General Assembly approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 72 (l)?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraph 72 (m), which relates to item 129, entitled "Seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War". May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 72 (m)?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all the information that the General Committee wishes it to take note of and approve all the recommendations of the General Committee contained in paragraphs 72 (a) to (m)?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraphs 73 (a) and (b), which relate to sub-item (b) of item 94, entitled "No first placement of weapons in outer space", and item 96, entitled "General and complete disarmament", for consideration bythe First Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 73 (a) and (b)?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraphs 74 (a) and (b), which relate to item 133, entitled "Programme planning", and item 144, entitled "Administration of justice at the United Nations", for consideration by the Fifth Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 74 (a) and (b)?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraphs 75 (a) and (b), which relate to item 171, "Observer status for the Developing Eight Countries Organization for Economic Cooperation in the General Assembly", and item 172, "Observer status for the Pacific Community in the General Assembly", for consideration by the Sixth Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 75 (a) and (b)?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to paragraph 76 of the report of the General Committee, on the allocation of items to the plenary and to each Main Committee.

I first turn to the list of items recommended by the General Committee for consideration directly in plenary meeting under all the relevant headings.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items listed for consideration directly in plenary meeting.

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we come to the list of items that the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the First Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decision just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the First Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decision just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

It was so decided.

The President: We now come to the list of items which the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the Second Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Second Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Third Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decision just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Third Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we come to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Fifth Committee under all the relevant headings.

Taking into account the decision just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly, we come to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Sixth Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decision just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of these items for consideration by the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of the first report of the General Committee. I wish to thank all the members of the Assembly for their cooperation. Each Main Committee will receive the list of agenda items allocated to it so that it may begin its work in accordance with rule 99 of the rules of procedure.

I would now like to draw the attention of the representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the Holy See in its capacity as an observer State in the session and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/314, of 1 July 2004, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/58/871, the Holy See, in its capacity as an observer State, will participate in the work of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

I would also like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the State of Palestine, in its capacity as an observer State, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolutions 3237 (XXIX), of 22 November 1974; 43/177, of 15 December 1988; 52/250, of 7 July 1998; and 67/19, of 29 November 2012, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/1002, the State of Palestine, in its capacity as an observer State, will participate in the work of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

In addition, I would like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the European Union, in its capacity as observer, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolution 65/276, of 3 May 2011, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/65/856, representatives of the European Union will participate in the work of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

As announced in the *Journal of the United Nations*, I should now like to consult members on the appointment of the Credentials Committee for the twenty-ninth special session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014.

In accordance with resolution 67/250, of 21 February 2013, the special session will be composed of plenary meetings on 22 September 2014 from 1 to 9 p.m. In the light of the limited duration of the special session, there will not be sufficient time to constitute that Committee and provide it with the opportunity to examine the credentials in accordance with rule 28 of the rules of procedure.

I understand that it is therefore desirable to proceed to the appointment of the Credentials Committee for the special session at this plenary meeting in order to allow the Committee to proceed with its work in a timely manner.

In that regard, may I take it that the Assembly, recalling rule 28 of the rules of procedure and taking into account the duration of the twenty-ninth special session of the General Assembly, as stipulated in resolution 67/250, of 21 February 2013, decides to proceed to the appointment of the Credentials Committee for the twenty-ninth special session?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 3

Credentials of representatives to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly (rule 28)

(a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

The President: Members will recall that at its 1st plenary meeting, on 16 September 2014, the Assembly, on the proposal of the President, decided to appoint a Credentials Committee for the sixty-ninth session consisting of the following Member States: Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Denmark, Jamaica, Namibia, the Russian Federation, Senegal and the United States of America.

May I take it that, on the proposal of the President, the Assembly decides that the States I have just mentioned are hereby appointed the members of the Credentials Committee for the twenty-ninth special session of the General Assembly?

It was so decided.

The President: The Credentials Committee for the twenty-ninth special session of the General Assembly is now fully constituted.

Before concluding, I would like to remind members that draft resolution A/69/L.2, entitled "Measures to Contain and Combat the Recent Ebola Outbreak in West Africa," submitted under agenda item 124 (Global Health and Foreign Policy), will be considered this afternoon, at the 3rd plenary meeting.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.

United Nations A/69/PV.3

General Assembly
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New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 124

Global health and foreign policy

Letter from the Secretary-General (A/69/389)

Draft resolution (A/69/L.2)

The President: I should like to remind members that the debate on agenda item 124 is scheduled to take place on 10 December 2014.

Over the past six months, the Ebola outbreak has ravaged countries in West Africa in an unprecedented manner. Today, we come together as a family of nations in solidarity with the most affected countries — Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone — which have demonstrated great resolve and determination in the face of this daunting challenge.

Later on, the Secretary-General will brief the Assembly on the response of the United Nations system to the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa. I commend him for his personal efforts on this matter. I also thank Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization, and Dr. David Nabarro, the Senior United Nations System Coordinator for Ebola Virus Disease, for their dedicated efforts.

The World Health Organization reports that of the nearly 5,000 people infected by the Ebola virus, about 2,500 have died so far. As shocking as those statistics are, the actual number of casualties from Ebola is likely to be even higher, since many deaths are going unreported. The virus is spreading exponentially, with half of all current cases recorded in just the last three weeks. The predictions from the World Health Organization are ominous. Given the current rate of infection, as many as 20,000 people could be infected with the Ebola virus over the next few months.

The time to act in a swift, coordinated and purposeful manner is now. Without quick and decisive action, the trail of devastation that this outbreak leaves behind will reach far beyond the parts of West Africa most affected up to now. Ebola is no longer a subregional or even regional calamity; it is an international crisis. Our immediate focus must be on containing the outbreak, both in terms of its geographical spread and the number of victims. As the Secretary-General has pointed out, the Ebola crisis has evolved into a complex emergency, with significant political, social, economic, humanitarian and security dimensions. The outbreak is unmatched, both in terms of lives lost and damage to already fragile health systems. Precious resources are being diverted from the treatment of other critical diseases, and the affected countries are struggling to maintain basic health services, with people dying from otherwise treatable medical conditions. Women are particularly at risk, given their roles as primary caregivers and community leaders. In Liberia, estimates indicate that as many as 75 per cent of the fatalities are women, while in Sierra Leone their number is around 59 per cent. Women are much more likely to be front-line health workers, which also puts them at higher risk.

The outbreak could also have far-reaching, destabilizing effects, and it comes at a time when the

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three countries most affected have started to enjoy relative peace, security and stability. Prior to the outbreak, all had made collective efforts to enhance socioeconomic development and to consolidate hard-won peacebuilding achievements. We must not allow Ebola to turn back the tide of progress for those countries.

In the light of those tragic developments, we have before us a draft resolution (A/69/L.2), in which the General Assembly welcomes the Secretary-General's plan to establish the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER). As envisioned, the Mission will harness capabilities and competencies across the United Nations system in a single, unified structure, in order to ensure a rapid, effective, efficient and coherent response to the crisis and to support national, regional and international efforts. The draft resolution also calls on Member States and relevant United Nations bodies to provide their full support to this critical Mission. In due course, the Secretary-General will submit a detailed report for consideration by the Assembly during this session.

Today, the General Assembly should add its powerful voice to that of the Security Council in calling on the international community to take immediate steps to support the countries affected by this deadly virus. While a high price has already been paid, the cost of inaction could reach unimaginable proportions. Together, we must take immediate, coordinated, decisive action to combat this destructive outbreak. I commend the draft resolution to the Assembly for adoption.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: I thank the General Assembly for convening on such short notice to address the Ebola outbreak at a time of busy preparations for the new Assembly session. We are all aware of the immensity of the suffering in West Africa and the enormity of the challenge. This crisis demands the attention of the entire membership of the United Nations. We must show solidarity as one United Nations and one global community. We must break through institutional barriers and any other hurdles that could impede rapid action. The General Assembly has a key role to play in showing the world the effective, responsive, caring face of the United Nations.

Earlier this year, I visited Sierra Leone in order to mark the closing of the United Nations peacekeeping operation there and to celebrate the country's remarkable turnaround from years of war and atrocities. In so doing, Sierra Leone has demonstrated the value of sustained international engagement and solidarity. Its neighbour Liberia has also known the depths of conflict and misery. It, too, wrote a new chapter in its history with the help of United Nations peacekeepers and other international support for its own painstaking efforts. Guinea, for its part, has achieved inroads against hunger and made progress towards some of the other Millennium Development Goals. The solidarity that made those gains and transformations possible is now needed to preserve that progress and help the people who have been thrust into the turmoil and uncertainty of the Ebola outbreak.

A crisis that started as a public-health emergency has taken on much wider scope, with significant economic, social, humanitarian, political and security dimensions. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there are nearly 5,000 cases of Ebola virus disease in the region. But WHO also indicates that, given the shortfalls in reporting and monitoring, the real number is likely to be much higher. More than 2,500 people have died, and, as in so many other areas, women bear the brunt of the impact. They make up 70 per cent of the victims, reflecting the fact that it is women who form the bulk of health-care workers and who are more likely to care for sick relatives and prepare bodies for burial. The number of cases is doubling every three weeks. The fear of contagion is itself proving contagious, disrupting economic activity and the provision of social services. Spillover effects in the region and beyond are increasingly evident. As the disease spreads, a truth becomes clear. None of us can consider himself insulated from the threat of Ebola; all of us must be part of the response.

The Governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone are determined to do whatever they can to address the crisis. They have also written to me, asking the United Nations for assistance and support. We are strongly committed to mobilizing the international community and helping a full range of partners to do what is needed to respond to this challenge. The World Health Organization, under the leadership of its Director-General, Ms. Margaret Chan, has developed a response road map and is working with the affected countries to identify the best possible epidemiological ways to address the outbreak, including through a combination of Ebola treatment centres and community care centres.

The United Nations system is providing assistance and expertise. At the same time, we must do much more. There is an urgent need to take international action to the next level. Members have before them my letter outlining the scope of the new United Nations mission that I have decided to establish (A/69/389). The United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) will provide a platform for wide-ranging international efforts. It will have five priorities: first, to stop the outbreak; secondly, to treat the infected; thirdly, to provide essential services; fourthly, to preserve stability; and, fifthly, to prevent outbreaks in non-affected countries.

The Mission will support national efforts. Reinforcing Government leadership will be one of its guiding principles. The Mission will also emphasize community outreach, training and education. Misunderstandings about the disease and how it is transmitted have hindered the response so far. Local leaders, including traditional and religious leaders, have important roles to play in raising awareness. This morning, I spoke by telephone with His Excellency Mr. John Dramani Mahama, President of Ghana. He expressed his immediate and wholehearted support for the efforts of the United Nations and agreed to host the headquarters of UNMEER in Accra. UNMEER will also have offices in each of the three most affected countries. President Mahama is also allowing the country's international airport to be used for the vital air bridge. I would like to express my profound gratitude for those contributions.

Many Governments and organizations have come forward with impressive contributions of military assets, human resources, financing and supplies. African countries and the African Union have shown admirable solidarity. The United States has announced that it will take a number of significant steps, including the deployment of 3,000 troops to provide expertise in logistics, training and engineering. I commend President Barack Obama for his leadership.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Government of Cuba for its announcement of plans to send a 165-member team of doctors and nurses to the region. That is in addition to Cuba's robust medical assistance to Haiti and is a wonderful expression of global solidarity. I appreciate the support and solidarity of President Castro Ruz. I am also very grateful to the Government of China for its generous support. A 59-member Chinese laboratory team left Beijing for Sierra Leone earlier this week and will soon be on the ground there, delivering much-needed care and expertise. I thank President Xi Jinping for his leadership.

Those contributions are important and highly welcome. I hope other Member States, along with the private sector and civil society, will do far more. Our best estimate is that we need a twenty-fold increase in assistance. Earlier this week, the United Nations outlined a set of critical needs totalling almost $1 billion over the next six months. The protection of staff and all health responders must also be a top priority in halting the transmission of the disease. In order to attract and retain the doctors and medical professionals required at this time, we need to be able to provide emergency medical evacuation, should they become infected with Ebola in the conduct of their duties.

I call on countries with the means to enable us to provide such vital assurances. I also reiterate my appeals to air and shipping companies not to isolate countries. Travel and border restrictions will not prevent the virus from getting out but will prevent supplies and health responders from getting in. Beyond our current focus on the emergency, there is a need to address fundamental gaps in health care and other basic services. It is not too soon to initiate a global discussion and to come up with new ideas that will allow for more timely action and prevent the next epidemic.

As each day passes, more people die. Many more are infected. The demands of response and containment become exponentially greater. To bring the crisis under control, all of us will have to work in unorthodox ways, break through barriers and leverage the best that each of us can bring to bear. Speed is of the essence. Action by the General Assembly today through the adoption of draft resolution A/69/L.2 will enable the United Nations to quickly increase its capacity to deliver in the affected countries.

The establishment of UNMEER is only the beginning. We will need to stay engaged and reach new heights of cooperation. No single State or organization can do that alone. I look forward to Members' strong and rapid support for the new United Nations health emergency mission and for the countries and peoples who have turned to us for help in a moment of critical need.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Before proceeding further, in view of the desire of members to dispose of this item expeditiously, I should like to consult the Assembly with a view to proceeding immediately to considering draft resolution A/69/L.2. In that connection, since the draft resolution was circulated only this morning, it would be necessary to waive the relevant provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

> "As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly, unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting."

Unless I hear any objections, I will take it that the Assembly agrees with that proposal.

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/69/L.2.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Gettu (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): In connection with draft resolution A/69/L.2, entitled "Measures to contain and combat the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa", I wish to put on record the following statement of financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Under paragraphs 1 to 3 of draft resolution A/69/L.2, the General Assembly would welcome the Secretary-General's intention to establish the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response; requests the Secretary-General to take such measures as may be necessary for the prompt execution of his intention and to submit a detailed report thereon for consideration by the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session; and calls upon all Member States, the relevant United Nations bodies and the United Nations system to provide their full support to the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response.

The Secretariat is in the process of preparing the modalities for the implementation of the requests contained in the aforementioned paragraphs of the draft resolution. The related resource requirements are being assessed and will be sought through the appropriate budgetary mechanism of the Organization.

The President: Before proceeding further, I would like to make the following oral revision to the ninth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution. The paragraph will now read:

> "Noting the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2176 (2014) of 15 September 2014, and resolution 2177 (2014) of 18 September 2014."

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.2, entitled "Measures to contain and combat the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa", as orally revised. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.2, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/69/L.2, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 69/1).

The President: We will now hear statements after the adoption of the resolution.

Mr. Ngafuan (Liberia): Allow me to begin by extending my personal congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly. We are proud as Africans to see you in that position, and my delegation assures you of our fullest cooperation to ensure the success of your tenure.

I also extend Liberia's deep appreciation to you, Sir, for your initiative in proposing the positive and forward-looking resolution 69/1, entitled "Measures to contain and combat the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa". Liberia wholeheartedly supports the resolution adopted in this Hall today and calls on all Member States to take practical actions to implement it, as it is another significant step in the difficult battle to defeat, once and for all, the deadly enemy called Ebola.

Since the disease invaded the subregion some months ago, its rapid spread has confounded our national Governments, as well as our partners. The outbreak has come at a time when the affected countries were enjoying a semblance of peace, security and stability after many years of civil upheaval and had begun to take some laudable strides amid challenges to respond to the multifaceted development challenges inherited from years of conflict. In Liberia, it came at a time when the health system of the country was just beginning to endure the shocks of the civil conversion and therefore not adequately robust to withstand a pandemic of such huge magnitude.

The toll that the epidemic is now exacting on the country is enormous and incalculable. The already weak

health system has been plunged into further paralysis. Many protected health workers, who have been at the forefront of the fight against this deadly disease of a scale of magnitude they have never seen before, have become casualties themselves, and 80 per cent of those infected succumb to the virus. Nearly 70 per cent of those infected are women.

As the death toll increases, more children are being orphaned, adding to the existing social problems. The fear created by the outbreak among those who seek non-Ebola-related health-care attention is having a dreadful effect on the health sector and on the country. The situation has seriously undermined the country's ability to sufficiently respond to other more routine illnesses, such as malaria, measles, diarrhoea and typhoid fever. Pregnant women seeking medical assistance while trying to give birth are also dying, owing to fears among health workers of contracting the virus.

The Ebola disease poses a threat to the peace and security of our country, as many Government functions have been suspended to deal with the emergency. The economic impact of the outbreak is undermining the ability of the Government to continue to provide basic services for the Liberian people. Meanwhile, measures taken by the Government and our many partners, notably the World Health Organization, Médecins Sans Frontières and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have thus far been unsuccessful in disrupting the further transmission of the virus.

As if the situation were not debilitating enough, the affected countries are facing virtual economic sanctions and quarantine. The restriction of travel from affected countries and the banning of flights can only lead to an aggravation of the effects of the outbreak and undermine efforts to contain the disease. Liberia wishes to thank those countries that have lifted the measures imposed earlier and are now opening their doors for the coordination of global action in fighting the disease. We encourage others to adopt that approach.

My Government is very encouraged by the various actions taken in the past month or two to significantly reinforce the international response to the continuing spread of the Ebola virus disease in the affected countries. Several high-level appointments are being made by the Secretary-General to sharpen the focus of the United Nations on what is now an issue of global concern. The United States Government announced a level of support to the region that we think will have a monumental impact. And yesterday the Security Council adopted resolution 2177 (2014), sponsored by some 134 States, recognizing the risks that the Ebola epidemic poses to peace, security and stability at the national and international levels and setting out some measures to respond more robustly to the disease.

The recent meeting of the Security Council (see S/PV.7268) afforded an opportunity that was seized by an impressive number of Member States to indicate the various levels and types of support that they intend to provide. We extend the deep gratitude of the Government of Liberia to all those who participated in that open debate and for the various types of support offered, including the words of solidarity, all of which assured our people in Liberia and the diaspora that they are not alone in the difficult struggle against the disease.

The Secretary-General capitalized on that occasion to announce his proposal to establish the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response in the region. Keeping up that momentum, you, Sir, have lost no time in submitting resolution 69/1 today, with the objective of enabling the Secretary-General to move ahead in defining the modalities for implementing his proposal. We commend that prudent and swift action, because lost time translates into lost lives. It is our expectation that a new mission, coupled with other structures and administrative arrangements that the Secretary-General has put in place in New York, will ensure strong United Nations leadership, effective coordination and efficient delivery of goods and services with national ownership at its core.

Liberia congratulates you, Mr. President, on this effort, and we commend all our international partners for joining us in putting an early end to this disease, which has ravaged our part of the continent.

Mr. Motsoaledi (South Africa): South Africa joins the other delegations that have spoken before us in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the role of President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. We assure you of South Africa's support and cooperation. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his initiative in the convening of this special session.

South Africa welcomes the adoption of resolution 69/1, on measures to contain and combat Ebola in West Africa. The unprecedented outbreak of the Ebola virus disease in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone — which,

according to the World Health Organization, has affected more than 4,300 people and killed more than half of those who have contracted the disease — is a serious indictment of all of us as members of the global community. The Ebola virus outbreak painfully highlights how a public-health issue can very quickly turn into a foreign policy issue and have devastating effects on a country's economy, trade and international relations.

Unfortunately, public-health issues attract our attention only when they get out of hand and once a large number of people have died. In the past three weeks, cases have dramatically increased in the three countries, with widespread and intense transmission. That highlights the urgent need to enforce control measures and increase capacity for case management, safe burials, contact-tracing and social mobilization.

The outbreak continues to expand geographically. It continues to escalate. There are still critical shortages of Ebola treatment-centre beds in the three countries due to the intense and widespread transmission. Although laboratory capacity is gradually expanding, there are still critical needs in a number of locations. Increased laboratory capacity is essential for proper screening and triage of patients.

In response, South Africa has provided a mobile laboratory with experts to Sierra Leone. That laboratory will be further expanded because of the increased workload. Further laboratory support will be provided for Liberia. We will establish a 40-bed field hospital in Lakka, Freetown, close to the mobile laboratory, which will assist in addressing the critical shortage of beds. The field hospital will be staffed by 75 health professionals. The process of recruiting those professionals is under way.

Through the procurement mechanisms of the World Health Organization, we will purchase 9,600 basic sets of personal protective equipment plus 6,400 sets of heavy-duty personal protective equipment for health workers in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. We will provide medical supplies plus commodities for infection control, four ambulances, four 4x4 vehicles, 70 motorcycles and four generators. We have as a country called on all partners to work with the Government to respond to the crisis. Many partners in the private sector, academic institutions and civil society in South Africa have responded positively. Today, we received pledges from companies that are listed on the Johannesburg stock exchange. Most of them will support logistics and provide in-kind donations, financial contributions, air travel, ambulances and medical supplies.

At the request of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), South Africa is providing training in Ebola preparedness for 94 participants from 16 countries. That training, which will start on Monday, 22 September, will further assist in strengthening surveillance, case-finding and detection, reporting and tracing, and information-sharing on the Ebola virus disease in a timely manner. It will enhance clinical management of infected patients. South Africa is further providing support in conducting tests for samples that may be sent from SADC countries to our laboratory. The South African National Institution for Communicable Diseases plays a leading role for the whole SADC region in that regard. It is also worth noting that, at the national level, South Africa has already taken action to ensure comprehensive response measures against Ebola should the virus be detected in the country at any stage. For instance, 11 hospitals in the country have been designated to be on standby in case of Ebola outbreak.

The fact that the Ebola outbreak is the largest and deadliest to date and that it is taking place in countries that are in need of strong basic-services infrastructure and health systems means that international support to those affected countries is absolutely essential. We welcome the support provided by other States and the valiant efforts of civil society actors, such as Doctors Without Borders and the World Health Organization. They all need our assistance.

Mr. Msosa (Malawi): On behalf of the Group of African States, I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting, a day after the Security Council had a debate and adopted a resolution on the scourge of Ebola (Council resolution 2177 (2014)). It is vital that the Ebola outbreak remain a high priority on the global agenda, particularly because it is not a problem that affects only the continent of Africa but one that affects us all. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his initiative aimed at establishing the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response. In that vein, the African Group welcomes the adoption of resolution 69/1, entitled "Measures to contain and combat the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa".

The Ebola virus disease epidemic, as we are all aware, has caused an unprecedented public-health emergency that affects the African continent and

beyond. Since the outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus in December 2013 in West Africa, citizens in affected countries have been engulfed by absolute fear. Traders, farmers and health officials can no longer go about their daily business without the uncertainty of who might be next in the Ebola trail, which could possibly rob them of their very livelihoods. The Ebola crisis is even more difficult for post-conflict countries that have fought to make progress in community reintegration, rehabilitation and the rebuilding of their social fabric. The retardation of economic development is all the more worrisome.

The African Group wishes to express its thanks to the United Nations and its Member States for their commitments in financial and human resources to make sure that this deadly disease is tackled. The African Group welcomes the initiative of the African Union (AU) in spearheading continental efforts to respond to the epidemic and its ongoing efforts, including the invocation of article 6, subparagraph (f), of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. That sub-paragraph relates to the AU mandate with regard to humanitarian action and disaster management, as well as to the deployment of a joint public-health, military and civilian mission to affected countries that was authorized by the African Union Peace and Security Council at its 450th meeting, on 19 August.

Furthermore, the Africa Group would like to welcome the AU's Interagency Task Force on Ebola, whose functions include lobbying and advocacy for ethical and effective responses to Ebola at various levels. Currently, as part of its advocacy and lobbying efforts, the AU is engaging African Union member States that have closed their borders and placed restrictive measures on air travel to ensure that humanitarian principles of access, international health regulations and the recommendations of the World Health Organization are met.

The AU's African Centre for Disease Control and Prevention for early detection is a long-term approach designed to enhance the process of operationalization through information-sharing, tracking of the development of the disease and implementation of effective, coordinated responses.

It is worth emphasizing that continuous research, assessment and analysis of Ebola will serve a very useful purpose in the long run. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for us to listen and be guided by the realities on the ground. Yesterday, in the Security Council debate on Ebola (see S/PV. 7268), we heard a very personal and powerful testimony by Mr. Jackson K.P. Niamah from Médecins Sans Frontières in Monrovia. There is a need to continue to allocate adequate resources, financial support and capacity-building as well as basic resources such as food, water and clothing. Equally important is the need to provide psychological support and love to the victims rather than treat them like outcasts through their process of isolation. As we move together in our common fight against deadly Ebola, those stories should drive and focus our efforts.

Finally, I wish to reaffirm the Africa Group's continuous support and efforts to ensure the adequate coordination and harmonization of all strategic efforts and implementation processes to achieve our desired goals on the continent of Africa.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vrailas (European Union): Since I believe that this is the first time we are taking the floor at the current session of the General Assembly, my delegation would like to warmly congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption of your important duties. We wish you the very best in your endeavours and will fully support you in all your efforts to move the General Assembly agenda forward during what will be a key year for the United Nations and the international community.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. We thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting. We also thank the Secretary-General for his important statement and all his personal efforts in trying to tackle the crisis caused by the Ebola virus outbreak. We are deeply concerned about the crisis, which is not only a regional problem but one that affects us all, as confirmed yesterday in the emergency meeting of the Security Council on Ebola (see S/PV.7238). We deplore the loss of lives, both among citizens of the affected countries and among international responders. We pay tribute to all humanitarian and health workers on the front line, who are working tirelessly to bring the crisis to an end.

We welcome the United Nations coordination system created by the Secretary-General, including the establishment of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response, to ensure that all relevant parts

of the United Nations system are activated and working coherently.

The European Union is preparing a comprehensive framework in response to the Ebola epidemic, which will also include considerations on related impacts, notably the food crisis, the health system crisis and the negative macroeconomic impact. That document, aligned with the Ebola response road map of the World Health Organization (WHO), highlights the main challenges and the ways in which the European Union has assisted and will further assist with the response.

We will continue to assist the most affected areas in particular, and to work with all actors involved — the national authorities in the affected countries; WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other parts of the United Nations system; regional partners, including the Economic Community of West African States; and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Médecins Sans Frontières and other non-governmental organizations — to help tackle the disease as swiftly and efficiently as possible.

As it stands, the European Union has pledged €150 million for the treatment of patients, training, measures to contain the epidemic, medical laboratories, maintaining basic health services and budget support. As part of that package, the European Union has also provided €5 million to the African Union to support their efforts to provide assistance to the affected countries. To that, one needs to add the very substantive bilateral contributions made by EU member States, both in funding and through in-kind assistance, including the secondment of specialists. Some of their bilateral contributions are coordinated through the Union's Civil Protection Mechanism.

The European Union and its member States are working actively to find possible options to reduce the growing isolation of countries in the region. The European Union will address the urgent need to retain and re-establish transport links and the necessary medical evacuation. We all recognize the magnitude of the challenge in front of us. The European Union and its member States are committed to deploy all efforts to step up support and assist in putting an end to this outbreak.

Mr. Minah (Sierra Leone): Let me commend you, Mr. President, on your elevation to your present position in what promises to be a momentous session for us all.

Yesterday the Security Council spoke with one voice by passing the historic resolution 2177 (2014). Today, when given the opportunity, the General Assembly has also made its voice heard. Beyond the resolutions, it is now a time for action. Most of all, we should bear in mind those on the front line: the doctors, the medical workers, the nurses, the burial boys and others who have volunteered to help others without concern for their own safety. We should also bear in mind the fallen. Names that were strangers to us are now sadly familiar: Dr. Umar Khan, Dr. Modupeh Cole, Dr. Olivet Buck and countless others who have given their lives in the service of the victims.

When the current Ebola epidemic started, few in West Africa knew about the extent of the danger it posed. As we sit here today, we all fully realize that it is now a global health emergency. That has been certified by the World Health Organization, which has been matched by the declarations of public health emergencies in the States primarily affected. West Africa, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone are united in grief and united in suffering. But we are also united in the hope and the conviction that this, as with the civil conflict in our States in the recent past, will also pass. This, too, shall pass.

With the help of the global community, we are confident that all we hope for in terms of logistics and material, both human and otherwise, will find its way to the region. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his leadership, and we are grateful for the creation of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response, which we hope will bypass the normal institutional bureaucracy and be set up as soon as possible.

When we look to the future, we know that those countries, which were the victims of civil conflict, will regain their development momentum. It is as a global community that we will best be able to face a global threat.

What started as a medical emergency has now become an economic emergency, a humanitarian emergency and, in certain circumstances, a public security emergency. The World Bank has already recorded a drop in the development levels of the three countries, to varying degrees, and also projects further drops in those indices.

The Ebola virus epidemic has had a disproportionate impact in that women, who are the primary caregivers

in the homes to their ill and suffering family members, are also disproportionately victims of the virus. We ask that all initiatives and measures taken be not gender-neutral, but gender-sensitive.

As we look to the future beyond the resolutions, and as we look to the actions and measures that the United Nations and States will take, we are mindful of those who have pledged and already proposed support. Those States are too numerous to mention, but in particular I would like to single out the members of the Security Council, especially the United States of America and China, but also States that have excelled in what can perhaps be best described as health diplomacy, such as Cuba, which not only has a history of health diplomacy but has responded in dramatic fashion by sending over 165 doctors to the region.

We are grateful for the many pledges of support that have occurred between yesterday and today from our colleagues and from Member States. We are gratified that the call to action by the Secretary-General and by the President of the Assembly has been answered so emphatically.

In this time in which we conduct our business at this session, we are occupied — or perhaps preoccupied — by many issues in front of us. This session, as I said before, will be momentous. But we have demonstrated by our actions today and by the Security Council's action yesterday that when called upon we can achieve a singularity of purpose in a common objective.

There is no doubt that the road ahead will be difficult. There will be many more victims. But what the United Nations has emphatically declared is that we will not be defeated by the disease; we will not be cowed into silence or fear by this epidemic. All of us, no matter how large or how small, have a role to play. A culture of fear should not allow the epidemic metastasize into something greater.

Today, as I speak, we have word of various shipments going to Sierra Leone, supplies being delivered and various national and international groups, including non-governmental organizations, mobilizing over social media and from the epicentre of the disease to make a difference and to make their voices heard in terms of practical support.

At the end of the day, all that we do and say here must have relevance on the front line. Our prayers and thoughts go to the fallen. Our prayers and thoughts are with those who continue, day in and day out, in difficult circumstances and with limited supplies, to answer to the ultimate call of the Hippocratic Oath: first, do no harm; secondly, others above self.

We are gratified by the support that we have received in this house. The three primarily affected States will continue to be grateful and to do their part in strengthening their public-health systems going forward, beyond Ebola, to make sure that we are not faced with a similar threat in future.

Mr. Touré (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): First, allow me to convey my delegation's warm congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your outstanding election to preside over the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I also wish to express my delegation's profound gratitude for the convening of this important meeting, which is part of the new momentum of the international community in its fight against the haemorrhagic fever caused by the Ebola virus.

Guinea welcomes the initiative by the Secretary-General to deploy a United Nations emergency response mission against the epidemic in the West Africa subregion. We also welcome the adoption of resolution 69/1, on measures to contain and combat the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa. That initiative eloquently illustrates anew the Secretary-General's personal commitment and determination to mobilize all of the efforts of the international community to contain and eradicate the scourge of the Ebola virus, which, unfortunately, has already claimed too many victims and now threatens to destabilize our countries.

As the Secretary-General stated, the unprecedented crisis that is in full swing in Liberia, Sierra Leone and in my country, Guinea, demands unprecedented measures to save human lives. We dare to hope that all of the initiatives will lead to the establishment of a large coalition to combat the Ebola epidemic.

To date, the epidemic has claimed over 2,400 lives, including caregivers. In Guinea, where the epidemic began in March, the number of cases has risen to 882, of which 662 have been confirmed, including 555 deaths. The victims range in age from 15 to 45 years, with women making up the majority.

Adding to the crisis at hand, the epidemic has gravely affected our economies, as seen in the decline in commerce and productivity and in decreased activity in many other sectors, including transport, investment and tourism. The World Bank has warned that if the Ebola virus epidemic is not contained and rapidly

eradicated, its economic impact on the three countries most affected will be catastrophic. In Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the quarantine of certain areas has interrupted agricultural production and the distribution of certain foods. That has led in turn to panic, penury and significant price increases for basic foodstuffs.

At present, urgent action is necessary, not only to halt the health crisis and save human lives, but also to preserve stability and the progress achieved with the help of the international community through the Peacebuilding Commission and other United Nations bodies, as well as through bilateral and multilateral partnerships. To that end, the response of the international community must be global and coordinated in order to guarantee the best results as quickly as possible.

I would like to reassure the Secretary-General that his initiative has already created a feeling of relief and hope in my country and in the subregion. The Government and people of Guinea are committed to closely cooperating with the United Nations for the success of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response.

To conclude, I would like to commend the American presidency of the Security Council, the members of the Council and all of the delegations that yesterday sponsored resolution 2177 (2014), on the Ebola virus disease. It is eloquent testimony to solidarity on a grand scale. We would also like once again to thank France, the United States, Russia, China, Japan, the United Kingdom, the European Union, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the many other bilateral and multilateral partners that, alongside the World Health Organization, Médecins Sans Frontières and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, as well as other countries, such as Morocco and Mali, have from the beginning shown proof of solidarity, fraternity and friendship.

Ms. Cousens (United States of America): I wish to thank the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and their teams for their extraordinary leadership in confronting the Ebola virus and for mobilizing all the determination and the resources of the United Nations system behind that. We are taking the floor to strongly support the Secretary-General's proposal for a United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response.

Yesterday, an unprecedented 134 countries came together to sponsor Security Council resolution 2177 (2014), which calls for swift and decisive action to scale up the global response to the Ebola epidemic. Today, the General Assembly comes together to signal its concern, to add its voice and to pledge strong support to the United Nations effort. In doing so, we stand together in saying we will not turn a blind eye when human tragedy is unfolding, and we will not bury our heads in the sand when called upon to act.

The United States is answering this call for specialized capabilities and resources and will work in close coordination with the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response. We welcome the commitment of other Governments, foundations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to join in the effort. The real measure of our impact will not be the commitments we make, but the commitments we deliver on and the speed with which we act. The math is simple: the sooner we act and the more of us that contribute, the more lives we save. Most of all, we are humbled and inspired by all of those working on the front lines to fight and turn back this disease.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At this very moment in the Security Council, where Argentina is serving as a non-permanent member, there is an important debate taking place on the challenges and complexities confronting us in the situation in Iraq. However, my country could not be absent from this meeting of the General Assembly — the most representative body of the United Nations — to express not only our pleasure but also the commitment of our delegation to the adoption by consensus of resolution 69/1, on measures to contain and combat the recent outbreak of Ebola in West Africa.

We also wish to decisively support the Secretary-General's proposal to establish the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response. Without a doubt, that initiative will enable us to provide an effective, comprehensive response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, which is an issue that, given its implications and the risk of spillover effects, involves all of us and requires a response from all of us.

On behalf of the people and the Government of the Argentine Republic, I would like to express to the families of the thousands of victims and their Governments our deep sorrow and our absolute solidarity. Argentina will cooperate with the Mission,

which is a cause for everyone. Without doubt, the seriousness of the current Ebola epidemic justifies our meeting here to decide, to take action, to determine urgent measures to avoid having the living conditions of people of the world being dramatically affected, as is happening in our brother countries in West Africa.

In consonance with the Secretary-General, Argentina sees the Ebola epidemic not only as a health problem, but rather as a multidimensional reality, and this is how we must tackle it. We recognize that an epidemic of these characteristics, if we do not contain it in short order, can have huge humanitarian, economic and social consequences. It could also bring about conditions leading to institutional instability or social insecurity.

The West African countries do not deserve this. They do not deserve this because they have made great efforts in post-conflict situations to put themselves on the path to inclusive economic and social development. They do not deserve this — not the West African countries, nor the developing world, nor all of humankind. That is why we believe that at this time of deep suffering for many, time is pressing. We cannot spare any efforts, but we cannot impose unconnected actions. That is why Argentina supports the United Nations and its specialized agencies as the entity that should have the responsibility for coordinating the various efforts, contributions and lines of action that are soon to be implemented because of the urgency required.

Argentina supported the adoption of resolution 69/1 and wishes to underscore that it was adopted by the General Assembly. It is encouraging that the Assembly has exercised its responsibility to follow through on proposals — in this case from the Secretary-General — to consider issues that do not affect or endanger security alone. These are situations that, by learning from mistakes made and lessons of the past, enable us to be lucid and effective so as to put rights at the forefront, and not the violence of the future.

We heard yesterday — and here I express my solidarity with the countries of West Africa — that an epidemic of such characteristics could have been avoided or more effectively tackled if those countries had more sound, more comprehensive health systems with proper infrastructure, and if they had more trained human resources at their disposal. This is not the time to scold or blame them. We have to understand the profound causes for this inequality, because the Ebola outbreak is one face of poverty and inequality. That is why it seems to me that we, the developing countries, are not dull or incompetent, but rather aware that we must continue to work for a more just distribution of wealth, to achieve profound reforms of the international financial system, to achieve financing for development based on cooperation and solidarity and to free ourselves from the enormous weight of sovereign debt and establish fair rules in debt restructuring.

Yesterday, the World Health Organization Director-General, Ms. Chan, said in the Security Council (see S/PV.7268) that this was a social, economic and humanitarian crisis. Allow me to reaffirm that it is also an ethical and political crisis, as it uncovers the consequences of poverty — the poverty that we have pledged to eradicate, but with the dignity in which we all deserve to live. What a paradox that women are the majority of the victims — not because we are weaker, not because we are more vulnerable, but rather because we almost exclusively are the caregivers. How will we change the world if in West Africa, with the poverty, inequality and injustice of a global order — which we must change — the term "to care" has become synonymous with dying?

Mr. Kamau (Kenya): As this is the first time I address the Assembly with you, Sir, as President, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of the role of President of the General Assembly. I also congratulate you on your decision to allow this debate to take place today on this important and pressing matter: the Ebola crisis.

I would like to align myself with the statement of the African Group as delivered by the representative of Malawi.

The Ebola crisis is a devastating emergency whose economic, social, psychological and life-threatening implications are horrendous. It is no exaggeration to say that in order of magnitude and as a potential threat to life, families and society, this crisis is among the worst threats we face in the world today. The Mano River countries, particularly Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, are at the epicentre, engulfed by this virus, which is posing existential threats of historic proportions to them. But none of us is safe. None of us is either too far away or too rich to be within the reach of this virus. The lessons of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and other global epidemics must not be forgotten. We ignore Ebola are at our own peril.

It is therefore heartening to see the General Assembly recognize the importance of this issue and give it prominence and global attention here at this meeting. Let me once again congratulate you, Mr. President, and the Secretary-General for having recognized that the Ebola horror that has now engulfed those countries is indeed a crisis of international proportions, one that deserves a global response. Indeed, as was recognized in the Security Council just yesterday, the crisis demands that it be recognized and defined as a threat to international peace and security and as a humanitarian emergency of potentially global proportions.

My delegation therefore welcomes the establishment of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response — the United Nations response — and recognizes that this response must have the following four important dimensions. It must recognize, first, the urgency of this crisis and the need for a swift and determined response, and, secondly, the scale of the challenge and the need for a commensurate scaled-up response that fits that challenge and its potential to escalate. Third is the need for thoroughness in the technical response to ensure that we do not create fear nor failures and lapses that might undermine the response and the confidence of the affected populations. Fourth is the need for solidarity in the character of the response, through which we must ensure that the countries and the response de-isolate the affected countries and de-stigmatize the affected populations. The solidarity must seek to build a global response that meets the national challenge that each of these countries faces.

The President of Kenya, His Excellency Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, has led a determined national response to the Ebola crisis in our own country. Kenya has spoken directly and forthrightly about the crisis at the African Union, both in Addis Ababa and earlier this week in Malabo, as well as within the East African Community only yesterday. Our President has been emphatic in stressing Kenya's solidarity with the affected countries and their populations. Kenya has put in place a national preparedness programme to ensure that the virus does not find fertile ground in our country to cause further havoc around the world.

In reaching out to our sister countries, last month Kenya donated a total of $1 million — $350,000 to each of the three worst-hit countries — as a humble token of our solidarity. Kenya stands ready to do more by sharing expertise on Ebola management, by supporting diagnostic capabilities, by making available specialized laboratories and by deploying health workers and doctors within the context of the international response.

Kenya is also concerned by the isolation of the affected countries that has resulted from the travel bans and transport communication restrictions that have been imposed. On Wednesday this week, our Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs announced in Addis Ababa that the Kenyatta Administration was working hard with the legislative arms of our Government to seek a review of the ban of Kenya Airways flights to the affected countries.

Close to 3,000 people are dead and many more have been infected in just a few weeks of the spread of this virus. This may sound unalarming to our jaded international community sometimes, but the projections of the trajectories of this disease are sobering and shocking. Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, among other countries in the region, need urgent and determined support.

Let us learn our lessons. Health-system investments, like in investment in education and poverty eradication, are as much an economic and health imperative as they are an imperative for national, global peace and security, and indeed an imperative for human survival.

Mr. Mukerji (India): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and for the initiative that resulted in the adoption of resolution 69/1 by all 193 Member States this afternoon. We salute you for the alacrity shown in taking this initiative. Even in your first few days in office, you meet our high expectations and confidence.

Though the outbreak of the Ebola virus is occurring in West Africa, it is a matter of grave concern for my country and for all of us who are Members of the United Nations. We are united today by our common responsibility. We pray for all those affected by this virus. We commit ourselves to working together with our partners in finding a cure for this disease.

The needs of the affected countries are large. They include an urgent need for funds, transportation, doctors, health services, medical supplies and social mobilization. The affected countries obviously do not themselves have the wherewithal to meet all those requirements. My country has provided medicines and financial assistance to the Governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. We have also made an

additional financial contribution to the World Health Organization specifically earmarked for addressing the Ebola virus outbreak.

India has troops available in the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), including an all-female formed police unit. Apart from the maintenance of law and order, they will do whatever is asked of them by the UNMIL leadership as part of the United Nations system's response to this outbreak.

India has deep-rooted and historical connections with West Africa. There are 45,000 Indian nationals living in that part of the continent. We therefore are together with the people of West Africa at this time of crisis.

We commend the Secretary-General and you, Mr. President, for your leadership. The coordinating role of the General Assembly, which consists of all the Members of the United Nations, is central to responding to the requests by the Governments of the affected countries. We reiterate our continued support to our partners in West Africa, both bilaterally and through the United Nations, at this hour of need.

Mr. Gumende (Mozambique): Since this is the first time I have taken the floor at this session, I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate you warmly, Mr. President, on your assumption of your duties in presiding over the proceedings of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I would like to assure you of our support as you discharge your duties as steward of our deliberations. My delegation would like to express its appreciation for the convening of this meeting and its gratitude to the Secretary-General for spearheading the establishment and deployment of a special United Nations emergency response mission to combat the Ebola outbreak that is afflicting some of our sister countries in West Africa.

We consider resolution 69/1, adopted today, and the Secretary-General's initiative to be appropriate responses for mobilizing the necessary political will and resources, given the alarmingly fast spread of this highly lethal virus, which has caused so much suffering to the communities affected and the regrettable loss of more than 2,500 lives, particularly in our sister countries of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. The epidemic is already disrupting economic activities, affecting livelihoods and jeopardizing the development gains attained in the past few years, threatening to derail the consolidation of peace and stability in these countries and the entire subregion.

We share the view that the impact of this epidemic has now become a global health emergency in which the international community should collectively undertake to play an active and effective role so as to help bring it under control as quickly as possible. In that regard, we commend those countries and organizations that have already pledged to provide support and resources for assisting the countries most affected, as well as their neighbours, including announced deployments of personnel and the African Union's support for the Ebola outbreak initiative. We would like to acknowledge the efforts of the medical teams on the ground that have been working in very difficult and dangerous conditions, risking and sometimes losing their lives in order to help those in need, as they strive heroically to contain the spread of the epidemic.

National and regional leadership and effective communication will continue to be important requisites for the success of this endeavour. We therefore commend the Secretary-General's emphasis on establishing a strong, system-wide approach to coordination by the United Nations that will interface closely with the Governments of the countries affected and with other partners. It will ensure a fast, united response that will avoid duplication of effort and encourage the efficient use of resources. We hope it will also help to strengthen overstretched public-health institutions and ensure a sustainable response to the epidemic in the long term, beyond the current emergency interventions. We would like to assure the Secretary-General of our support in this endeavour and look forward to following it closely as implementation of the initiative unfolds.

Mr. Lasso Mendoza (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to reiterate my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly. You can count on our support during this intensive part of the session.

Ecuador would like to express its sincere solidarity with its African brother countries suffering under the terrible epidemic caused by the Ebola virus, particularly Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. We have been in contact with those countries' Governments in order to consult them on their requirements and needs at this difficult time, with the goal of giving our solidarity and support concrete form within the framework of action in the United Nations, especially the World Health Organization.

We commend the countries, particularly those in Latin America and the Caribbean, that have sent personnel and appropriate equipment to the areas affected by this terrible disease. In that regard, I should highlight the generous cooperation of Cuba, which has sent a medical team. This brother country of ours, despite decades of an unjust and illegal blockade, has continued to display its great generosity since, as the Cuban Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs said yesterday (see S/PV.7268), it does not give what is left over; it shares what it has.

As the organ that represents all States Members of the United Nations, it is the particular duty of the General Assembly to debate and take decisions concerning topics related to international cooperation in the face of a health emergency, as described in paragraph 1 (b) of Article 13 of the Charter of the United Nations. We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this urgent meeting to enable us in the General Assembly to address this situation and thus to shoulder its responsibility.

Finally, I would particularly like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for establishing a United Nations mission for the emergency response to Ebola. I would like to underscore my country's support for the work of the Mission, and for the efforts of Dr. David Nabarro, Senior United Nations System Coordinator for Ebola, and of the World Health Organization.

Mr. Moncada (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. We wish you every success in your stewardship of the Assembly and you can count on our firm support.

Venezuela commends the adoption of today's resolution 69/1 and its provisions for containing and combating the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa. We join with the rest of the international community in actively expressing our concern about the alarming reports of this devastating epidemic. The capacity for destruction of this disease, which is threatening Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and other countries, could spread even beyond the continent. These circumstances ineluctably leave the international community and its principal multilateral bodies with the task of agreeing on the effective, coordinated and speedy measures that the emergency requires. As we have heard, the epidemic's exponential rate of growth demands an immediate response.

Just a few months ago, these West African countries were entering a period of stability, peace and economic recovery, after dealing with bad outbreaks of internal violence. We cannot ignore such issues when analysing the current situation, and they should alert us to the possibility that those recent difficulties, which those countries have barely begun to overcome, could re-emerge. This emergency public-health crisis will undoubtedly have broader implications involving political, economic, social and humanitarian issues. We should emphasize the very troubling fact that 70 per cent of Ebola victims have been women, showing that in these circumstances the issue of gender requires special attention.

I would also like to mention the resolution adopted at the first meeting of the Special Committee of the South America-Africa Cooperation Forum, held on 8 and 9 September in Quito, Ecuador, where serious concern was expressed about the Ebola epidemic and its negative effects in the region, and at which it was agreed, among other things, that the Union of South American Nations should convene a meeting as soon as possible to discuss ways and means of supporting our brother countries in Africa. Furthermore, today's briefings to the General Assembly by the Secretary-General and by the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as WHO's report, are testimony to the sensitivity of this issue and the priority it should be given on our agenda.

We should point out that the exponential increase in the number of victims owing to the Ebola epidemic is also partly rooted in the poverty of the region as a result of decades of violence, plunder and ruin. It is therefore a matter not only of addressing the health emergency but also of rebuilding those institutions that can bring about the stability, peace and prosperity of the region. We hope that the establishment of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response and the solidarity of Member States provides results in the for, of an effective and efficient response so as to address the catastrophe.

Finally, I would like to say that our Bolivarian Government follows a policy and the humanitarian principle of unconditional solidarity with the peoples of the world, who seek the pursuit of common happiness and the achievement of peace. It has always addressed, without exception, the inequalities and social inequities that beset most peoples in the world. The tragic situation

that our brotherly countries of Africa are currently experiencing will be no exception.

In that regard, given the urgency of the situation, our Government is considering how it can best leverage the specific assistance that we will provide to ensure its swift delivery to the peoples and Governments impacted by the disaster. I also wish to report that we are in direct contact with the Presidents of the four relevant countries so that we can contribute as rapidly and effectively as possible. They can count on our assistance and ongoing support.

Mr. Shearman (United Kingdom): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened today's meeting on this vital issue. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his powerful statement on a health crisis that has profound implications for us all. The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the observer of the European Union. I would like to add some remarks to that statement.

The current Ebola epidemic has become a humanitarian, social and economic crisis for the three most affected West Africa countries and their 22 million people. If we fail to act now, it threatens to become a catastrophe that will destroy economies and neutralize the gains of recent years. It is crucial that the international community work together to fight and stop the epidemic not only by assisting the three most affected countries but also by helping other countries in the region to be ready if the disease spreads to them.

The United Nations has a vital role to play in bringing Ebola under control. We welcome the adoption of resolution 69/1, on measures to contain and combat the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. We also welcome the efforts made so far to coordinate, to scale up and to speed up the response of the United Nations system, in particular the announcement by the Secretary-General of the establishment of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response.

In addition, we welcome yesterday's adoption of Security Council resolution 2177 (2014), with a record 134 sponsors. The United Kingdom is committed to playing its part. We have already started work on the provision of a $60 million Freetown health centre. That centre will give confidence to health workers who are bravely battling against Ebola. British military experts and staff from Save the Children UK have already joined them on the ground to get the centre operational. On Wednesday, my Foreign Secretary announced a significantly increased package of support. At the heart of that package is the commitment to lead and to underwrite the provision of a total of 700 treatment beds for Sierra Leone. More than 200 of those beds are already in the delivery pipeline. We will now deliver a further 500 treatment beds and work with partners to provide and train the international and national staff needed to operate them. That is in addition to the support that we are committing to partners such as the World Health Organization, the Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières, the International Rescue Committee, the Ebola Response Consortium, UNICEF and other parts of the United Nations system.

We welcome the announcements of support from others, such as the generous United States assistance to Liberia, this week's announcement that France will step up its support to Guinea, and pledges of help from countries such as China, Canada and Cuba, as well as those made yesterday in the Security Council (see S/PV.7268). However, we need a huge and sustainable global effort if we are to beat the scourge. Without an immediate concerted global push, Ebola will kill many thousands more, affecting communities for a generation. Now is the time for united action. We call on all countries to join the global coalition against Ebola without hesitation or doubt and with the determination that we will end the terrible outbreak.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Mexico is pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. We wish you success in your leadership and assure you of our cooperation and support throughout the session.

My delegation wishes to acknowledge the timely convening of this meeting a day after the Security Council adopted resolution 2177 (2014). It calls on all Member States to respond as quickly as possible to the urgent need to address the serious challenge of Ebola, which is affecting several countries in West Africa and threatens to spread.

The crisis compels us to reflect on the urgent need to strengthen national health-care systems and to take national and international action in order to deal with the outbreak in the short term. It is a crisis without borders and therefore requires a borderless response without obstacles or conditions. Resolution 69/1, which we adopted today, supports the initiative of the Secretary-General to establish the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response and clearly

demonstrates the common will of the Organization to cooperate and to provide humanitarian support.

As in the case of the cholera outbreak in Haiti, to which Mexico responded, I would also like to convey my delegation's solidarity with the countries affected by Ebola. The health care that some countries of West Africa need today requires our rapid, effective, sustainable and generous response. Let us remain mindful of the possible implications of the crisis for international peace and security. Above all, may we be sensitive to the needs for social development and health services of the affected countries. Mexico stands ready to provide its support and solidarity to deal with this emergency and to ensure that the affected countries can return to the path of development as soon as possible with the full support of the international community.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil): First of all, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the office of President of the General Assembly and to affirm Brazil's full cooperation during your term in office. I also wish to thank you for having convened this important meeting today. I wish to reiterate my delegation's appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General and for the leadership shown by the Director-General of the World Health Organization in establishing the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) with the urgency that that requires.

Yesterday, the Security Council adopted resolution 2177 (2014) on the response to the Ebola crisis with an unprecedented number of sponsors — a clear recognition of the gravity of the outbreak and a sign of the awareness of the serious consequences that health-related emergencies pose for our development efforts.

Today, the General Assembly rallied behind the Governments and the peoples of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone and expressed its commitment to fully supporting UNMEER. Brazil will remain completely engaged in such efforts and solidarity with our friends in Africa. I would like thank the Secretary-General for outlining the basic objectives of the Mission in his letter dated 17 September to the President of the General Assembly (A/69/389) and for highlighting the importance of concerted and coordinated action among the United Nations system, the World Health Organization, Member States and other relevant organizations.

As Brazil declared yesterday in the Security Council (see S/PV.7268), I wish to reaffirm the intention of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) to serve as a platform for the exchange of information and raising of awareness on the severity of the emergency. As Chair of the PBC, Brazil would have liked to see a recognition in resolution 2177 (2014) of the PBC's early warning to the international community on the Ebola epidemic and its dramatic proportions.

We are particularly encouraged by the strategic purpose of UNMEER to provide training infrastructure for medical and non-medical personnel, as that will enable local health-care providers to safely carry out their work and, in line with the principles stated by the Secretary-General, build the necessary capacity to strengthen the national systems in the countries affected, so that they will be prepared to prevent future outbreaks. We must not forget that the crisis presently affecting Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone is, more than anything else, a health emergency and a social and developmental challenge. It must be dealt with as such, with the General Assembly playing a central role. We look forward to examining the upcoming report of the Secretary-General on the necessary resource requirements for UNMEER and we call for the support of all Member States.

Finally, I must make a special mention of appreciation to the health-care providers — doctors, nurses — humanitarian workers and all others who have been part of efforts to fight the Ebola epidemic in West Africa as well as those who will take part in UNMEER. We wish them quick success and a safe return.

Mr. Okamura (Japan): Let me begin by expressing Japan's deepest sympathy to the families of the ever-growing number of victims of Ebola and to the people and the Governments of the affected countries. It is important to coordinate our actions at the international level in order to rapidly address this global health crisis. To that end, Japan is very grateful to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his leadership in addressing the crisis. That is why the Government of Japan lends its full support to resolution 69/1, which we have just adopted. Japan expects that the United Nations will combat Ebola as one body, by making the fullest use of the new United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response mechanism.

I would like to briefly share Japan's efforts to respond to the emergency. We have so far provided $5 million for West Africa, dispatched Japanese medical doctors and supplied 20,000 infection-protection suits for health-care workers. Japan also stands ready to

provide a new medication against Ebola developed by two Japanese companies, Toyama Chemical Company, Ltd. and the Fujifilm Holdings Corporation. Over the long term, we will continue to support the African countries' own efforts in improving their resilience against public health crises. Strengthening Africa's social and economic resilience is one of the priorities of Japanese policy towards Africa.

In conclusion, I join other speakers in expressing our hope that this Ebola outbreak will be quickly brought under control. I would like to reiterate Japan's determination to take an active role in combating that global threat.

Mr. Grant (Canada): On behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, I extend our profound condolences to and solidarity with the peoples of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, as well as Nigeria and Senegal, for the extreme challenges confronting them due to the Ebola crisis. Canada remains deeply concerned about the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, which risks undermining the foundations for economic prosperity, security and social stability that have been painstakingly supported by the United Nations system, including the Peacebuilding Commission.

(*spoke in French*)

We recognize that this crisis has arisen in a chronically fragile situation in regions where great poverty reigns, which have barely recovered from decades of conflict and civil unrest. In partnership with the United Nations system and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Médecins Sans Frontières and other actors, the Government has clearly expressed the urgent need for a collective response if we want to succeed in avoiding worst-case scenarios.

(*spoke in English*)

We are looking to the United Nations to present a coherent approach to enable timely and effective responses by the global community. In that regard, we welcome the degree to which the Secretary-General and the United Nations as a whole are making the response to the Ebola crisis a key priority. Specifically, the establishment of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response is unprecedented, and we expect that it will provide much-needed field support to those working on the front lines of the crisis.

Canada made early contributions in support of humanitarian and security interventions to help contain the spread of Ebola throughout West Africa. We have provided expert deployments, vaccines and material and financial support. Our contributions to the World Health Organization (WHO), Médecins Sans Frontières and local Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations has helped established the base for their respective response activities. In addition, Canada has deployed a mobile laboratory to Sierra Leone with rotating teams of Canadian laboratory technicians and supplies. We have also enabled the deployment of four Canadian Red Cross delegates to Guinea and Sierra Leone and four Canadian experts to Sierra Leone working for UNICEF, and committed over $2.5 million in personal protective equipment to WHO for distribution.

Recognizing the extraordinary circumstances and for the benefit of the global community, Canada donated to the WHO nearly a thousand doses of the experimental vaccine VSV-EBOV. We have also actively contributed to the WHO expert panels on Ebola.

Canada is now considering the United Nations appeal issued on 16 September and will work in a coordinated manner with all partners to make it possible for an effective global response to bring the outbreak under control. We shall continue to support those collective efforts to bring an end to the terrible suffering and loss of life caused by the Ebola crisis.

Mr. Zamora Rivas (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. We are confident that under your leadership, Sir, this body, the most representative of the United Nations, will strengthen its role in order to respond to events that concern our membership.

As an example of this leadership and the role of the General Assembly, we commend the work of your Office in submitting resolution 69/1, entitled "Measures to contain and combat the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa", which we have just adopted. We also take note of resolution 2177 (2014), adopted yesterday by the Security Council on the same subject, from the perspective of international peace and security.

The letter sent to the Secretary-General by the Presidents of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone leaves no doubt about the need for a rapid, effective and united response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. But solidarity is not all that is called for when we are

facing the risk that Ebola could spread across the world. We are talking of no less than the health of our own people. We have faced such risks in the past, with sad results. El Salvador therefore welcomes the Secretary-General's intention to establish the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response, which should work closely with the World Health Organization as well as with all the agencies, funds and programmes of the Organization.

El Salvador occupies one of the world's most vulnerable territories, which is exposed to risks that include, among other things, earthquakes, volcanoes and climatic extremes. My country has always been the beneficiary of the solidarity of the peoples and the Governments of other countries when we have been affected by disasters related to those risks. Therefore, El Salvador sees it as an opportunity and an honour to reciprocate those expressions of solidarity by offering the affected populations whatever services the United Nations considers relevant.

In that regard, we wish to go beyond simply responding to the call of the United Nations to urge all Member States to join in this noble endeavour. Just four days ago, our Minister for Public Health publicly invited personnel from my country's health sector to help the victims of this disease. As of this morning, more than 80 doctors, along with dozens of health workers, have signed up to offer their professional services to those in need in West Africa, wherever the affected countries and the United Nations decide they are most needed.

Mr. Wang Hao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. China would also like to thank you and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for your efforts, and China welcomes the swift convening of this meeting on the outbreak of Ebola.

We support the adoption of today's historic resolution 69/1, establishing a special mission in West Africa. The Ebola outbreak is currently raging in the West African countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, posing a serious threat to the lives and health of the countries concerned. When one side is in difficulty, all sides should help. Combating the outbreak of Ebola is no longer a task solely for the people and countries of Africa; it is also the common responsibility of the world. Time means lives. The characteristics of this Ebola outbreak enable it to spread quickly, widely and deeply. The more time it takes, the more difficult and more costly it will be to control the disease. China therefore calls upon the international community once again to lend intensified urgency to combating this outbreak and to quickly provide assistance to the countries concerned.

China experienced a severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003, and we keenly feel the suffering of the people of West Africa. The Chinese leaders and Government attach great importance to the outbreak in West Africa, and we therefore immediately provided assistance to them and shared our experience. As of today, China has 174 medical experts and workers deployed in the affected areas of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. Yesterday, President Xi Jinping announced that the Chinese Government has decided that, on the basis of the two packages of earlier assistance, we will provide additional emergency cash, food and material aid totalling Y200 million to Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, and $2 million to the World Health Organization and the African Union to support their struggle against Ebola.

As a next stage, China, together with all the countries of the world, will join forces with the countries concerned in West Africa to overcome the difficulties and achieve victory over the disease. We hope that, with the help of the international community, the people of West Africa will soon win the battle over Ebola and that national stability, along with economic and social development, will be restored as soon as possible.

Mr. Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Since this is the first time that I am taking the floor on behalf of my country at this session, I wish to extend to you, Sir, Cuba's most cordial and heartfelt congratulations. I assure you that you have the full support of our delegation. We have every confidence that you will ably lead members at this session. I would also like to commend you for convening this timely meeting, which is a credit to you and speaks to your able leadership as President from the Africa Group that one of our first meetings specifically looks, as it should, at the emergency in Africa caused by the Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

Allow me also, Sir, to express our support and solidarity with the authorities of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, whose foreign ministers all took the floor in the Security Council yesterday (see S/PV.7268). I believe that they are carrying out commendable and intense work and that our cooperation is essential to their success.

I would like now to refer to and support the Secretary-General's proposal to create a United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response in West Africa. His proposal comes at a time when it is absolutely essential to establish such a mission, and for it to be established under the leadership of the United Nations. The Mission addresses an issue that can wait no longer. Once again, we are convinced that we can be successful. The women, the elderly and the children of West Africa deserve that response.

I also wish to acknowledge Ms. Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization, who has been leading her organization's support of the work of the health authorities in the affected countries from the very beginning.

Cuba's Ministry of Health announced in Geneva our commitment to send a volunteer medical brigade to Sierra Leone to join the fight against the epidemic. All of the members of the brigade have at least 15 years of professional service and have worked in other countries, where they have tackled natural disasters and epidemics, as well as served on cooperative medical missions. We are prepared to work shoulder to shoulder with other countries, even those with which Cuba does not have diplomatic relations. Cuba's response is part of its assistance and solidarity with Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. In the battle against Ebola, which should be everyone's battle, Cuba decided to maintain its cooperation and extend it to the most affected countries. Those countries have already been informed of that initiative by our authorities. In the rest of the region not affected by Ebola, where we have over 4,000 health workers, we stand ready to help in preventing the disease.

The medical brigades that will be sent to Africa to tackle Ebola are part of the Henry Reeve International Contingent of Doctors, established in 2005 and made up of specialized doctors who are used to tackling disasters and major epidemiological issues. The Cuban Government's response confirms the values of solidarity that have guided our people and the Cuban revolution. As was said earlier on, those values lead us not to offer leftovers, but to share the little that we have.

Africa is awaiting an immediate response from all Member States, especially from those that have resources. I believe that, in some way or another, we all have something to give. It is urgent that we all join in the global effort against Ebola, and Cuba stands ready to continue to contribute to that effort.

Once again, we congratulate you, Sir, on this commendable initiative and on the adoption of resolution 69/1, which we were able to support today. We believe this is a timely moment and opportunity.

Mr. Eriza (Indonesia): My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing. My delegation would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. As the recent developments in global affairs have shown, your tenure as President will undoubtedly be challenging, but my delegation fervently believes that your commendable leadership will guide the Assembly in the right direction in carrying out the challenging tasks ahead. The convening of the Assembly's meeting on the agenda item entitled "Global health and foreign policy" to consider the adoption of resolution 69/1, on the Ebola outbreak, is a testimony of your able leadership within just a few days of your assumption of office.

Last month the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the 2014 Ebola outbreak to be one of the largest Ebola outbreaks in history. It has had massive humanitarian impacts on the most affected countries and on the region. Recently, we received a joint letter from the Presidents of the Republic of Sierra Leone, the Republic of Liberia and the Republic of Guinea appealing to the good in each and everyone of us to support their efforts to save people in their countries.

A coordinated international response to stop and reverse the international spread of the disease is indeed vital. As the Director-General of WHO said during her briefing to Member States earlier this month, now is not the time for lots of words, now is the time for action. My delegation therefore welcomes and fully supports the Secretary-General's initiative to establish the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response. We hope that the crisis can be contained soon.

Ms. King (Australia): Australia welcomes the adoption of resolution 69/1, which supports the Secretary-General's intention to establish the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response.

The Ebola outbreak is an urgent and devastating crisis. It has transformed itself into much more than a health crisis, as we all know, with grave humanitarian, economic and social consequences that could spread far beyond the affected countries. We have heard that the already high numbers of infections and deaths are multiplying exponentially, doubling every three weeks. Health systems in the affected countries have been

stretched to the point of collapse. Sick and infected people are being turned away from overflowing treatment centres to die. We have heard the dire forecast of what will happen if Ebola is left to continue its alarming spread. We know that action is urgent and that the United Nations system is critical to the response.

Despite the heroic efforts of all those who are grappling with the crisis, we have much catching up to do if we are to succeed in bending the epidemiological curve down from its current trajectory. The effects of the outbreak are still reversible, but only if the response and particularly isolation and treatment capacity are scaled up massively and quickly. It is absolutely vital that there be a coordinated and comprehensive response. Australia therefore strongly supports the Secretary-General's efforts, through Mr. Nabarro and by working closely with Ms. Chan and the World Health Organization (WHO), to ensure that the United Nations system plays a leading role in the global effort to control the outbreak. We recognize that this is an unprecedented challenge that requires an equally unprecedented response, which is why Australia welcomes and supports the Secretary-General's initiative to immediately establish the first-ever United Nations international public health mission.

Australia is committed to supporting the international response, and we stand in solidarity with the affected countries and their people. Our Minister for Foreign Affairs announced this week that Australia would immediately provide a further $7 million, including for the WHO consolidated regional response and to support the provision of front-line medical services. Australia will continue to assess areas where it can best contribute to the crisis.

Mr. Nduhuura (Uganda): As this is the first time that I take the floor, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

Uganda has experienced Ebola outbreaks four times in the past 14 years, with our worst experience in the years 2000 and 2001, which involved 425 cases. In 2001 Ebola killed 224 people, including Dr. Matthew Lukwiya, the doctor who accurately diagnosed and reported its occurrence. In 2007 it killed only 37 people, while in 2009 it killed 17. In direct comparison, as of a week ago, the reported cases in West Africa were over 4,700 in number and are still on the rise.

Uganda is prepared to share its experience and stands ready to continue providing the assistance required during this trying time. Our experience has taught us that aggressive public-health campaigns are key in curbing the spread of epidemics. The Ugandan Government was unreserved in sending out warnings, replete with descriptions of Ebola symptoms and advice on how to handle those presenting with it, as well as describing proper procedures for handling and burying the dead.

In Uganda, as soon as the first Ebola cases were identified, public health officials created makeshift quarantine facilities and called a press conference, together with the World Health Organization, to ask for help. We exposed the problem right away and demystified any stigma attached to it. Other measures included Uganda's active infectious disease-surveillance network, which offers a quick reaction time to deal with suspected cases. The swift local response created opportunities for international assistance to reach us. People looked out for the symptoms, and they immediately reported suspected cases to surveillance officials. It is one of the reasons that Uganda has successfully stamped out four Ebola outbreaks, even ones that have occurred in urban areas. Our high adult literacy rates also played a role, because that increased the options of the communication media in informing the general public.

Uganda shares the grave concern expressed by the rest of the Member States about the rapid deterioration of the health situation in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone and about the fact that the epidemic has begun to grow exponentially in that region, with no respect for borders. We stand in solidarity with those countries.

In July, Uganda sent a team of 20 of our top Ebola experts to Sierra Leone and Liberia. The team had specializations including epidemiology, case management, community education and psychosocial support. However, they quickly discovered that this was a situation where even protective equipment was insufficient. The medical workers needed equipment, training and resources. The disease once again claimed the life of one of Uganda's senior surgeons, Dr. Samuel Muhumuza Mutoro, in Monrovia. Fragile health systems create weaker support systems for medical personnel, who could potentially walk off a job that unnecessarily increases their chances of exposure.

In that respect, Uganda welcomes the Secretary-General's decision to establish the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER). We agree that the priorities of UNMEER should be to stop Ebola, treat patients, ensure continued services, maintain stability and prevent further outbreaks.

Africa has battled several challenges and has built up its medical human resources in spite of very many odds stacked against it, including HIV/AIDS. We cannot afford to lose the battle against this disease.

Mr. Deniau (France) (*spoke in French*): First, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

I would like to align myself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union.

The health crisis caused by Ebola has by its scale turned into a socioeconomic crisis, and it now constitutes a threat to peace and security. It is our duty to stop the progression of this scourge. This is why France has made the fight against Ebola a priority, and it is fighting alongside the African countries concerned. Our collective responsibility is focused on three priorities. These are to act, to coordinate and to prevent.

First, we must act. That is why, since the beginning of this epidemic, my country has taken the initiative to support the actions of affected African States and of the World Health Organization and non-governmental organizations that are contributing to the fight. The experts of French laboratories of the Pasteur Institute identified the presence of the virus last May, and they were among the first in the field in Guinea. Today, assistance from France to combat Ebola has reached over €60 million, with the funding going through the various relevant channels.

Strictly on a bilateral level, my country will provide €35 million to affected countries and their neighbours. A substantial part will be concentrated on Guinea, which the French Minister for Cooperation visited several days ago. In addition, the President of the French Republic has just announced the establishment in the coming days of a branch of the Pasteur Institute and a military hospital in the forested area of Guinea, a region known to be the centre of the epidemic. The hospital will be staffed with military doctors and doctors specialized in civilian protection and will have air support.

Next, we must coordinate the efforts to contain the epidemic. That is why, at the European level, at our initiative the European Union will quickly have the means to coordinate health evacuations. We are also working at the level of the United Nations, in close coordination with the World Health Organization and with the United Nations Coordinator for the Ebola Emergency Response, David Nabarro, concentrating our efforts specifically on Guinea, as Mr. Nabarro has asked us to do. We are also providing support, including human resources, to the Crisis Operations Centre based in New York.

Finally, we must prevent. We can contain Ebola if simple and strict health-safety rules are applied. But beyond that, we will find a lasting solution only by helping the countries affected to strengthen their health systems for the duration, and by focusing particular attention in those countries on the most vulnerable populations, in particular women. As the Secretary-General said earlier, this disease takes an especially heavy toll on women.

I would like to welcome the commitment of all the Member States that are participating in the international mobilization against Ebola. I also wish to commend the courage of the health staff in the affected countries, both local and international, who are working in the field to combat the epidemic. We must admire their courage. I have in mind in particular the dedication of the Médecins Sans Frontières teams. I think that we must really commend the courage shown by those men and women.

In that context, France can only strongly welcome the initiative that you, Mr. President, took in submitting the text of resolution 69/1, which we have adopted today. Following yesterday's adoption of Security Council resolution 2177 (2014), today's resolution reaffirms our full support and the mobilization of the entire United Nations system and all Member States. The meeting organized for 25 September by the Secretary-General will be another demonstration of that collective determination. As part of this international mobilization, which one must call historic, you, Mr. President, can count on the strong support of France.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): Sweden aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

Let me begin by expressing our deepest condolences to the families and friends of all those who have perished in the Ebola outbreak. We commend

the affected countries for their resilience and steadfast determination in these difficult times, and we pay tribute to the many brave health workers engaged in the tireless efforts to counter this terrible disease. Let me also express appreciation for the important support provided by the United Nations family and other international partners.

This important meeting is in itself an acknowledgment of the seriousness of the situation. We join others in a global appeal for a scaling-up of international efforts. We welcome the Secretary-General's initiative to convene a high-level meeting next week and his efforts to improve coordination of international assistance, not least through the appointment of a Senior United Nations System Coordinator. The decision today to establish a United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response is also critical in this regard.

Sweden has long-standing bilateral relations with the countries concerned. We are also a leading humanitarian donor globally, and we have responded accordingly to this crisis. We have already contributed $4.4 million to the three countries most affected, and we are in the final stages of preparing an additional package of $13 million for the appeal of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. We will shortly revert with additional substantive commitments, including logistical support.

As Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission country team for Liberia, we will continue to contribute to a comprehensive approach to this crisis, as well as to promote a regional perspective and link short-term assistance to the longer-term peacebuilding priorities in the country. We are committed to standing by all the countries facing this merciless epidemic, and we look forward to the opportunity to announce further significant support in the near future.

Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania): We too would like to commend you, Mr. President, on your assumption of your office and for convening this important meeting.

The voices we have heard here today, in the Security Council yesterday (see S/PV.7268) and elsewhere are truly encouraging. All that remains is to put those commitments into action. The victims of the Ebola outbreak deserve our sincere sympathy and support. Isolating and stigmatizing the victims, including through transport restrictions, is truly unfortunate. We call for an urgent review of such restrictions.

The Ebola outbreak has highlighted the fragility that persists in Africa as well as in other parts of the world. While we are directing our efforts to eradicating the Ebola outbreak in the short and medium term, in the long term what we have to do is to build the capacities of the health and humanitarian sectors so they can cope with major outbreaks such as that of the Ebola virus. At the African Union Summit in Malabo in June, His Excellency President Jakaya Kikwete expressed the readiness of the United Republic of Tanzania to support the regional interventions spearheaded by the African Union, as well as the international efforts, including those undertaken by the United Nations. Our resolve and commitment to support those measures continue. We will also continue to work with partners to strengthen the level of preparedness for addressing this Ebola epidemic.

Mr. Talbert (Guyana): I thank you, Mr. President, for your initiative in convening this important meeting and for your leadership in facilitating an urgent response by the General Assembly to the Ebola crisis. We welcome today's adoption of resolution 69/1, on measures to contain and combat the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

Guyana would like to take this opportunity to register its concern about the deadly Ebola epidemic, unprecedented in scale and impact, that has struck West Africa. We express our solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the countries affected, particularly Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and our support for a robust response on the part of the international community. The crisis brings with it a plethora of challenges that require a multidimensional and multisectoral response at the national, regional and international levels. In addition to the obvious public-health implications of the epidemic, the Secretary-General has drawn attention to the significant political, social, economic, humanitarian and security dimensions of the crisis.

The Governments of the affected countries are making valiant efforts to respond to the crisis and contain the spread of the disease. However, given its exponential spread, an urgent, massively scaled-up and coordinated global response has become imperative if we are to bring it under control and prevent its spread to other territories. Guyana supports all efforts to that end. In that regard, our delegation applauds the Secretary-

General's leadership and supports his initiative to establish the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response. For its part, the Government of Guyana is currently actively considering an appropriate contribution in the context of the global response.

The President: We have heard the last speaker on this item. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 124.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.

United Nations A/69/PV.4

General Assembly

Sixty-ninth session

Official Records

4th plenary meeting
Monday, 22 September 2014, 9 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 9.10 a.m.

World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

Agenda item 65

Rights of indigenous peoples

High-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

Draft resolution (A/69/L.1)

The President: The World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, the first ever convened, is truly a historic event. It is a great privilege and honour to welcome everyone present in the General Assembly today.

At the outset, let me pay tribute to the indigenous peoples of this land — the Haudenosaunee, also known as the Six Nations or Iroquois. I also wish to send a warm embrace to indigenous peoples around the world. I am truly honoured to preside over this Conference, which must focus on the challenges facing indigenous peoples and on renewed commitments by Member States to address them.

The World Conference on Indigenous Peoples is a culmination of the dynamic interface between the United Nations and the indigenous peoples of the world over the past 50 years. The process leading to this Conference has been unprecedented in the history of the Organization, as it has involved the active participation of indigenous peoples in its preparation as well as cooperation between Member States and indigenous peoples in the preparation of the draft outcome document. We are indeed heartened by the inclusive nature of the preparatory process, which bodes well for the implementation of post-Conference commitments.

For more than 30 years, indigenous peoples' issues have been a preoccupation at the United Nations. Negotiations between Member States and indigenous leaders, under the auspices of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, were indeed long and protracted, but they eventually led to the General Assembly's adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007.

Most important, the Declaration represents a global consensus on indigenous peoples' rights and affirms their right to self-determination. Furthermore, it accords pre-eminence to collective rights in international human rights law and serves to galvanize international attention on the protection of both the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples.

It is important to note the valuable contributions of the institutional arrangements that have served to translate the objectives of the Declaration into reality and fostered specific policies on how the United Nations should engage with and support the aspirations of indigenous peoples. Particularly, I would like to mention the contributions of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues, the Special

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14-54394 (E)

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Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

At a national level, there have been many declarations of commitments, policies and legislative actions to improve the conditions of indigenous peoples. Yet there continues to be a deep chasm between those commitments and reality. The World Conference should serve as a turning point for translating the Declaration into concrete action.

The draft outcome document, which we will adopt today, is another pact between indigenous peoples and Member States that builds on the Declaration. It is carefully crafted and comprises many action-oriented commitments directed towards addressing the gaps in the implementation of the Declaration. Included among the commitments are a system-wide action plan to ensure coherence in the various efforts towards realization of the provisions of the Declaration, as well as a call for enhancing the participation of indigenous peoples and their representative institutions at the United Nations.

This World Conference is an opportunity for Member States to engage indigenous peoples in a more strategic and beneficial manner. That will require Member States to make greater efforts to translate the draft outcome document into reality and to demonstrate resolve in addressing inequities that adversely affect indigenous communities. Member States must also follow through on capacity-building commitments that will allow indigenous peoples to manage their own affairs.

In conclusion, let me urge Member States, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and the private sector to make a renewed commitment towards strategic partnership with indigenous peoples to help in their quest for a sustainable future,

I now give the floor to Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: I wish to thank those attending for coming to the United Nations for this historic, first-ever World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. I am going to greet the General Assembly in a few indigenous languages. I am sorry that I cannot speak in every language represented in the Assembly, but please consider this my way of welcoming each person.

Takahi (Taíno — Latin America), *Aweh* (South Africa), *Kia ora* (New Zealand), *Buorre beaivvi* (Saami — Norway and Sweden), *Hao* (Lakota — North America), *Kopisanangani* (Dusun-Sabah, Malaysia).

This is the most important week of the year at the United Nations, and this Conference is one of our most important events because it connects so much of our most critical work. Indigenous peoples are concerned about issues that top the global agenda. They are deeply connected to Mother Earth, whose future is at the heart of the Climate Summit opening tomorrow. Indigenous peoples are central to our discourse on human rights and global development. The Assembly's deliberations and decisions will reverberate across the international community with concrete effects in the lives of indigenous people. The success of this Conference is integral to progress for all humankind.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

In order to prepare myself for this Conference, I met with many indigenous leaders to listen to the things they were concerned about and to learn from their experiences.

In June, I went to Bolivia, a country that has made enormous progress in the areas of the rights of indigenous peoples. President Morales was a decisive driving force for this conference.

The people of El Torno were very warm and generous. I was very much impressed by their wealth of culture. They taught me about the relationship of respect between indigenous peoples and nature. This could be summed up in the expression that I adopted in Bolivia: "Good living," which means to live well, but in a simpler way.

(*spoke in English*)

In July, I held talks with indigenous leaders in Costa Rica. The former Permanent Representative of Costa Rica, Eduardo Ulibarri, also actively promoted this conference. We had a meaningful, open discussion. I listened closely to what the indigenous leaders had to say. They were worried about land, resources and their rights. I repeated my pledge to address the exclusion and marginalization facing many indigenous peoples around the world.

Earlier this month, I was in New Zealand, where I travelled to Taupo to spend a day with Maori leaders. They were using their great respect for nature to build

prosperity. I was impressed by their multimillion-dollar horticulture, waste-management and energy-production companies. I will never forget how every bit of waste is fed to worms that create very rich organic fertilizer. That is sustainability in action. It showed how much the world can learn from indigenous peoples.

I will continue visiting indigenous communities and hearing from their leaders, and they will always have a home at the United Nations. I am proud that the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (resolution 61/295) during my first year in office. That set minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of indigenous peoples. More and more countries are reflecting those principles in their laws and constitutions. United Nations agencies have also developed specific policies to guide our work for indigenous peoples, and we are joining forces with indigenous peoples to reach our common goals.

I am pleased to welcome representatives of our leading experts, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and the Special Rapporteur and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I am sure they would agree that it is important to get pledges from Governments — but it is even more important to see actions. That is why I am encouraged that the draft conference outcome document (A/69/L.1) contains action-oriented commitments to bridge the gap between promises and results. I thank all the indigenous peoples and Governments that cooperated in good faith to produce that draft. And I expect Member States to meet their commitments, including by carrying out national action plans to realize our shared vision.

I welcome the outcome document's direct requests to me. I will also consult the rest of the United Nations system on the way forward. We will work closely with all of the indigenous peoples and the Member States. The outcome document also requests that I develop concrete proposals to enable indigenous peoples and their institutions to more directly participate in our United Nations activities. That is critical for indigenous communities — and for our world. The outcome document also asks me to appoint a high-level official on indigenous peoples. I will give that my most serious consideration. The United Nations will do everything possible to support indigenous peoples — and we count on their engagement in our global drive for a more sustainable future.

I began with greetings in a few indigenous languages. I know there are thousands of others. Some of them are in danger of extinction. I am proud that the Declaration has been translated beyond the United Nations' six official languages into 50 other languages. I hope we can add many more to the long list. At the same time, I count on the indigenous peoples to speak with one voice. A long-time indigenous activist and former member of the Permanent Forum, Tonya Gonnella Frichner, once said: "Indigenous peoples all speak many different languages but in our meetings, we are speaking one language. Our relationship to Mother Earth is identical."

I urge the indigenous peoples to join their voices in a harmonious chorus to secure their rights and protect our planet. The United Nations stands with them in this struggle.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his multilingual statement.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

President Morales Ayma (*spoke in Spanish*): I offer special wishes to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, to the President of the General Assembly, to all the representatives of States Members of the United Nations and to the representatives of the indigenous peoples of the world who are here and those who are listening to this first World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

First, on behalf of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, I would like to thank and congratulate the Secretary-General for having ensured for us the convening of this first official summit of the United Nations on indigenous peoples. I would like to say to all here, and to those listening, that the fundamental principles of the indigenous movement are life, Mother Earth and peace. Those fundamental principles of indigenous peoples throughout the world are constantly being threatened by a system, the capitalist system, a model of how one can put an end to life and Mother Earth itself. That is why I want to say to all of my brothers and sisters that I have come here to share with them some experiences that I have had during my short period of ruling Bolivia as a President who comes from the social movement, the indigenous people's movement.

In the history of Bolivia, indigenous people have been the most hated, humiliated, vilified, marginalized and discriminated against. Thanks to the struggle and awareness of my brothers, not just the indigenous

movement but also the social movements have had an opportunity to share experiences in order to defend life and change the models that so threaten life and nature itself.

I would like to tell the Assembly first of all that, historically in Bolivia, the indigenous movement was able only to vote, but not to govern. In this short time, we have shown that the indigenous movement does not exist simply to vote in elections, but also to govern. Thanks to the struggle of social movements, politics is no longer a business or a reward. Politics now means service, commitment and, beyond that, sacrifice on behalf of our peoples.

Secondly, those who govern the world need to govern by obeying their people and by working in collaboration with their people and with social movements. Our people and nations cannot be governed by bankers, powerful businessmen or multinational corporations. Bolivia is the first and only country to have incorporated the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into its legislation. The Declaration was given legal status in the Plurinational State of Bolivia in 2007. Likewise, the rights of indigenous peoples were incorporated into our Constitution, which was approved by referendum in 2009.

Thirdly, the natural resources so generously bestowed upon us by our Mother Earth should benefit all. Bolivia's oil revenues in 2005, before I became President, totalled $300 million. This year, following the nationalization of petrochemicals, oil revenues will exceed $6 billion. Quite frankly and with all due sincerity, I would like to let Members know that neither I nor our Vice-President nor the Cabinet realized how quickly the economic situation of our country would change. By nationalizing hydrocarbons, we freed ourselves economically from the gendarmes of the world economy, by which I mean the World Bank and, especially, the International Monetary Fund. Before, our economic policy was decided by those international institutions, which follow a model whose primary aim is the exploitation of our natural resources.

Fourthly, another important theme is climate change, which has become one of the most serious problems for the planet and for humanity. The best way to combat climate change is through the policies, experience and traditions of the indigenous movement, which are based on solidarity, complementarity and, most important of all, a lifestyle in harmony with Mother Earth. For indigenous peoples, the paradigm of living well means living well with oneself, with our communities and in harmony with nature.

Fifthly, indigenous peoples need to be the actors of change, in accord with their own models of development, with respect for the social, cultural, economic and judicial plurality of all peoples. We need to strengthen the links that unite us and to draw on our shared energy to build a culture of brotherhood, peace and life.

Sixthly, we need to tend and protect the world's agricultural lands and forests in order to promote the full productive potential of our territories, above all those that belong to indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples must likewise strengthen our capacity to feed all the nations of the world with our organic and ecological products.

Finally, it is imperative for the indigenous peoples of the world to achieve the full exercise of their individual and collective rights to their land and territories. We need to overcome our limitations with regard to development through access to education, health care, water, waste disposal and all basic services. Thanks to the economic improvement in my country and to the satellite systems we have installed, some of our brothers and sisters from isolated places — men and women who had never even seen the capital city of their province — are now better served and better connected, although not all of their demands have been fully met. It is difficult to meet everyone's demands in a short time frame, but change has begun to come to the various communities of Bolivia. Before, there was no telephone, no potable drinking water and no electricity. There was no television and no radio. Now, more than 80 per cent of our provinces and communities have potable water. Telecommunications reach more than 90 per cent. The major weakness remains the lack of irrigation systems. Meeting that need remains one of our responsibilities.

It is critical for all the world's Governments to further the process of overcoming and eradicating the conditions of extreme poverty and discrimination that still affect indigenous peoples, as well as to find solutions to the structural problems of poverty that many of those peoples still face. We have reduced the poverty rate from 38 per cent to 18 per cent, a historic record for Bolivia in terms of eradicating poverty.

Indigenous peoples have continuously resisted the processes of colonization in our countries and have always preserved the culture of life. We have learned

to live in harmony and equilibrium with Mother Earth, and we are humanity's moral reserve. This global conference should be the starting point for defining our collective action in defence of life and for launching a process of transformation and change based on the wisdom and science of our indigenous peoples, working directly in concert with the technology and scientific advances of our time.

Brothers and sisters, it is important, in the interest of our collective freedom, for me to share our small experience after taking on the responsibility of working for my country. We have to free ourselves politically in order to free ourselves economically. The Assembly knows perfectly well that throughout history there have been various empires that have sought to dominate us politically in order to steal from us for their own gain. Happily, political liberation through a democratic and cultural revolution has been crucial for our economic liberation and has enabled us to meet our people's demands. I am grateful to the United Nations and the General Assembly for the opportunity to participate in this international event for the world indigenous movement.

The President: I thank the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Sauli Niinistö, President of the Republic of Finland, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

President Niinistö: I am honoured to address the first United Nations World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. The participation of representatives of indigenous peoples in this Conference and in its preparations makes this event special for all of us. It reinforces our joint commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (resolution 61/295).

In addition, this Conference marks an important step in fulfilling a key recommendation made in Alta, Norway, a year ago. Indigenous peoples should have the right to participate in matters concerning them at the United Nations. We look forward to the Secretary-General's proposals in that regard. In that context, we must express our concern over the reported attempts to prevent the representatives of indigenous peoples from Russia from joining us today.

Indigenous peoples' participation in decision-making is vital also at the national level. Procedures may vary from country to country, but in all cases the objective should be to reach consensus in good faith. In Finland authorities are obliged by law to negotiate with the Sami Parliament, the representative body of the indigenous Sami people. Recently, the Finnish Government worked together with the Sami Parliament to expand the scope of the obligation to consult. The proposed reform spells out the concept of free, prior and informed consent.

Today, as we recall the words of former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, "Let us ensure that all young people have every opportunity to participate fully in the lives of their societies", we are witnessing the important role being played in this Conference by young indigenous delegates. Indigenous youth must have the right, means and support to participate in their societies. To that end, access to education, information and the means of communication is essential. In Finland Sami youth have taken significant steps to improve their cultural and political participation through the establishment of the Sami Youth Council. Measures to revive indigenous languages, including "language-nest" activities for children, have proved to be an efficient way to strengthen the identity of young indigenous people.

Finland's role in the Arctic is defined by our geography, and our Arctic expertise by our emphasis on sustainable development and environmental considerations, and by international cooperation. It is essential to secure the welfare of people living in the Arctic. We are convinced that that contributes to economic stability and enhances competitiveness. Climate change has consequences for us all. We must address them together.

Industries such as fishing, herding, hunting and tourism are vital to Arctic business development and to the livelihoods of the peoples in the Arctic. Finland is very pleased with the establishment of the Arctic Economic Council, two weeks ago in Iqaluit, Canada. Arctic business leaders and indigenous peoples are working together to facilitate Arctic business-to-business activities and responsible economic development. Traditional knowledge, stewardship and a focus on small businesses will play a central role in that work, which Finland will continue to support going forward.

The Nordic countries have a long tradition of cooperating with the Sami and Greenlandic representative bodies. Cross-border cooperation is vital for finding common solutions to common

challenges. Internationally, we work together on issues such as biodiversity. Cooperation between different stakeholders is not without challenges. Only true dialogue with all the relevant stakeholders will yield solid results that are beneficial for all. For that reason, the voices of indigenous peoples must be heard also at the United Nations.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Finland for his statement.

I now give the floor to The Honourable Henri Djombo, Minister of the Forest Economy and Sustainable Development of the Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Djombo (Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the Group of African States.

I would like, at the outset, to express the African Group's congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

The African Group is delighted to see that the meetings of this important World Conference dedicated to the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples are being led by Uganda, which, along with other African countries, has adopted a comprehensive and progressive approach to matters that concern indigenous peoples. We are also indebted to the President of the General Assembly at its previous session, His Excellency Mr. John Ashe. His persistence and leadership have ensured that this important meeting is taking place under the most favourable possible conditions.

We wish to emphasize that the process that led to this important meeting was a constructive and inclusive one and that it upheld the relevant provisions of resolution 66/296, of 17 September 2012, which called in particular for active participation in this Conference.

The African Group would like at this point to convey its deep appreciation for the important contribution of indigenous peoples to the preparatory process for this World Conference. Since indigenous peoples are both the subject of the Conference and key players in it, their active participation has contributed to draft resolution A/69/L.1, to be adopted today and which reflects their valuable contributions and recommendations. How could we not recognize, in the large numbers of us in the General Assembly Hall, the very affirmation of our shared faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and value of the human person and in the equality of the rights of men and women? Beyond those numbers, our common will to uphold the commitments contained in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is also illustrated here.

It is clear that the discussions we have had throughout the preparatory process for this conference, and even before, revealed the richness of sympathies surrounding indigenous issues. In Africa, the indigenous issue that brings us together today could be aptly discussed in the light of the continent's history, because the history of indigenous peoples varies from one region of the world to another and from one country to another. Today, the collective awareness has finally recognized the need to provide special protection to those communities, which have long been ostracized by discrimination.

For nearly a decade, African countries have embraced the cause of indigenous peoples and provided a new assurance of their commitment to that cause. We recall that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (resolution 61/295), of 13 September 2007, was adopted with broad support from African countries. That was undoubtedly a victory for justice and human dignity, after more than two decades of negotiations between representatives of Governments and indigenous peoples. The African Group views its effective participation in this conference along the same lines.

Since then, the situation of indigenous peoples has gradually improved, and several African countries now acknowledge the existence of indigenous peoples in their territories as First Peoples groups, but ones who have historically been marginalized. Our Governments are working to ensure their social integration and to promote and protect their rights as full-fledged citizens, able to fully participate in the life of our nations with due respect for their culture and language. Protection and social integration are now a reality.

Following a consultative process that identified the factors, causes and effects of discrimination suffered by indigenous peoples of the Congo, the Congolese Government developed a domestic law standard that reflects the Government's desire to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. That is the law for the promotion and protection of indigenous peoples of 25 February 2011. Now, three years after its adoption, the effects of that law, seen as

revolutionary and exemplary on the African continent, are noticeable.

In order to flesh out the law, in August 2013 the Congolese Government adopted a new national action plan to improve the quality of life of indigenous peoples. To ensure that they enjoy the dividends associated with the use of natural resources, the text provides for consultative and participatory approaches to take into account the free, prior and informed consent of the local indigenous populations with regard to the use of those resources. The standing provisions of that text guarantee the strict adherence to the sustainable exercise of rights and cultural activities by indiginous peoples.

As we know, the way of life and practices of indigenous peoples contribute to the care and maintenance of forest ecosystems and carbon sequestration. Therefore, my country calls on the international community and Governments to mobilize the necessary means to invest in the development of basic infrastructure near indigenous communities. That approach should include the promotion of income-generating activities and payment for environmental services.

Moreover, in order to give indigenous peoples a way to share their knowledge and their skills, the Republic of the Congo initiated and institutionalized the International Forum on Indigenous Peoples of Central Africa as a platform for integration and cooperation in the Congo Basin on indigenous issues. That institution, which is located in northern Congo in the Likouala department, has become an integral part of the operational bodies of the Economic Community of Central African States. As elsewhere in Africa, through the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples, the objective of my country remains the establishment of the rule of law, free from discrimination based on origin, ethnicity, way of life or culture.

The path of equality among the peoples is of course laborious and must be maintained by the strong will of our Governments. African countries are engaging in that effort and will continue to work with the United Nations system and all initiatives aimed at the development of those marginalized peoples. Africa will continue to participate in the efforts of the international community to combat any affront to human conscience and will spare no effort to contribute to the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples. That is the commitment of our Governments.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of the Republic of Estonia.

President Ilves: It is an honour to address this high-level meeting dedicated to the rights of indigenous peoples. As a member of an indigenous people — Estonians have lived on our present territory for several thousand years — I am especially happy to see among participants here so many of those whom the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples is about. Therefore, we can discuss issues faced by indigenous people together.

We have stood on both sides — as an oppressed indigenous people and now as a Member of the United Nations. We know what indigenous peoples face. I would like also to flag at the very outset that it is unfortunate that the participation of indigenous peoples in United Nations forums is constantly questioned. It is incomprehensible, if not to say bizarre and shameful, that some States attempt to hinder the participation of indigenous peoples and offer no explanation for their actions. We hope that this will soon be a thing of the past and that indigenous peoples will have a strong voice in the international community.

I recall that the indigenous peoples, those most directly affected by the provisions of the outcome document (draft resolution A/69/L.1) we are to adopt today, could not participate in the negotiations on it in the very last stages. However, I believe that their input in the earlier stages provided a good basis for the joint ownership of the document. I am pleased that in the outcome document that we are about to adopt, we can reaffirm our commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It includes clear deliverables to further improve indigenous peoples' rights, including stronger action by the United Nations. I hope that the outcome document will serve as a basis for the way ahead, and we are looking forward to its swift implementation.

The rights of indigenous peoples must be respected. The great majority of States do so, voicing their support for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Estonia has also voiced such respect. Unfortunately, however, in many countries, material gains are often prioritized over fundamental rights. It is crucial to understand that the cultural heritage of indigenous peoples is a form of wealth that clearly outweighs

the economic profit gained by the extensive and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources.

The reckless pursuit of profit at the expense of the cultures of peoples is precisely what we have witnessed in many Finno-Ugric areas. For Estonians, the future of Finno-Ugric peoples, with whom we are linked in kinship and language, is particularly close to our hearts. We know and have felt the fear of extinction. We have observed with concern that Finno-Ugric populations have decreased, while the sociopolitical activism needed to improve their position has not always corresponded to the major challenges in that area. The worst-case scenario, in our view, would be that national organizations vanish, their leaders be marginalized and the countries where they live become indifferent, claiming that, as such, indigenous peoples have no "perspective", to use a phrase that we know from the Soviet era.

Urbanization, industrialization, world wars, deportations and extensive migration have all left deep wounds within many indigenous populations, including, for example, the Votic population, our Finno-Ugric cousins. A few years before the turn of the millennium, the construction of the large port of Laugasuu began. It is being built on traditional Votic lands, where our cousins have lived for as long as we Estonians have lived on ours. That construction poses a great danger to the last three remaining Votic villages: Luutsa, Liivtšülä and Jõgõperä.

The construction of the port of Laugasuu is in conflict with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, but the current situation faced by the Votes is hardly unique. We all know that there is a long list of indigenous peoples living in the most challenging conditions. For example, side by side with the Votes lives another small Finno-Ugric nation, the Izhorians, who are especially threatened by the plan to erect a chemical plant right next to their villages of Rutsi and Viistina. If the chemical plant is erected and the environment devastated, the nation and the culture of the Votes will be endangered and may even be destroyed. Mankind will grow ever poorer.

To support our kindred nations, the Estonian Government launched the Kindred Peoples Programme in 1999. It is a Government aid programme to support the indigenous Uralic languages and cultures. It provides support in five different fields — education and training courses, research, culture and information exchange, health care and the protection of the environment. For many years, Estonian experts have contributed to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Our Government has also provided financial support to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations, and we shall continue to do so in the future.

I would like to acknowledge New Zealand for always including the Maori peoples in their delegation and meetings. I would like to thank Finland, Norway and Sweden for ensuring the presence of a representative Saami delegation at all United Nations meetings on indigenous peoples and for voicing their sincere concern about the future of indigenous peoples. I would like to associate myself with the statement made earlier by the President of Finland with regard to the inability of the Kola Saami to attend this meeting.

I would like to thank Ukraine for supporting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (resolution 61/295) and for recognizing the Crimean Tatars as an indigenous people. I would like to thank the many other countries that are taking steps to improve the situation of indigenous peoples. We are obliged to do everything that we can to support indigenous peoples, to respect their past and to grant them a future. All indigenous peoples must be acknowledged, no matter where they live, be it in the Leningrad oblast, Crimea, Amazonas State, New Zealand, Arizona or the Scandinavian peninsula. Let us learn to listen to the voices that have been silenced for too long and that too often continue to be so. We cannot allow the persistence of a colonialist mentality to cover up crimes committed against indigenous peoples, nor can we continue to deny indigenous peoples the right to have a say over their own futures.

In conclusion, the former Estonian President, the beloved writer and film-maker Lennart Meri, was one of those individuals who dared to listen to and to film such peoples. I would like to invite members to the opening of an exhibition of photographs from his film and his journeys to the Finno-Ugric indigenous nations in the Conference Building today at 6 p.m. It is a fitting tribute to a great film-maker and a man who devoted his life to showing how indigenous peoples live and how they have suffered.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Estonia for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the United Mexican States.

President Peña Nieto (*spoke in Spanish*): As President of Mexico and as the representative of a multicultural nation, originally founded on the basis of its indigenous peoples, it is a great honour for me to participate in this World Conference. I come to this plenary meeting to affirm the ongoing commitment of Mexico to the protection and recognition of the rights and freedoms of indigenous peoples in all regions and countries of the world. I express my highest appreciation to the General Assembly for its decision in 2010 to hold this historic event, which is the first high-level meeting dedicated exclusively to the well-being of indigenous peoples.

For Mexico, Latin America and the Caribbean, the indigenous issue is at the root of our identities and our historical, social and political circumstances. I mention that because of the linguistic diversity and the high number of indigenous peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean, who account for nearly 45 million people. However, I say it, above all, because of the commitment and leadership that indigenous women and men have shown over the years to the recognition, protection and promotion of their rights.

For Mexico, it has been a great honour to contribute to the preparation of this World Conference and the negotiation of its outcome document (A/69/L.1). The major objective is to achieve the effective exercise of the rights of indigenous peoples in all nations. That is a very significant achievement and the result of an open, inclusive and constructive dialogue between Member States and indigenous representatives. We have also taken care to ensure that their recommendations are in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Mexico trusts that the final document will be a road map enabling us to reposition indigenous issues on the international agenda and to give renewed impetus to the actions of the United Nations in that area.

The Mexican delegation appreciates the incorporation of several of the approaches it presented in favour of the indigenous of the world, including the following: the post-2015 development agenda should ensure the rights of indigenous peoples; the participation of first peoples in the work of the United Nations should have a status distinct from that of non-governmental organizations; national laws should be harmonized in the spirit of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and the Human Rights Council, in consultation with indigenous peoples, should monitor, evaluate and improve the implementation of the Declaration in each Member State. Mexico would like to see those ideas translated into concrete benefits for the estimated 5,000 indigenous peoples in the world.

We have to continue working together. Inequality, injustice and discrimination against indigenous peoples are still, unfortunately, a grim reality. To eradicate those practices and enable indigenous peoples to assert their rights, we need to strengthen international cooperation and, above all, intensify actions within each country. In Mexico, our Constitution recognizes and guarantees the right of indigenous peoples and communities to self-determination and thus to the autonomy to decide their internal forms of coexistence and social, economic, political and cultural organization. It also recognizes their right to preserve and promote their culture, traditions and customs in an environment of equality and non-discrimination.

For the more than 15 million indigenous people of Mexico to fully exercise those rights, the State relies on a cross-cutting policy, aimed at improving their quality of life and the creation of greater opportunities for development. That policy includes specific actions to eradicate hunger and overcome extreme poverty in indigenous municipalities as well as the construction of basic infrastructure in their communities. Furthermore, the main programme to fight poverty, which serves more than 6 million persons of indigenous origin, has been redesigned and strengthened. We are also determined to support their integration in public education, health-care services and adequate housing. We also encourage their access to justice and their efforts to increase production and marketing of their products and crafts, with a focus on sustainability.

In short, the Government of Mexico supports indigenous peoples so that they can achieve real, inclusive development and improve their income and quality of life, without losing their cultural identity or compromising the natural heritage of the country. In that regard, in accordance with international commitments, we have established a respectful and direct dialogue with various indigenous communities in order to guide public policy and infrastructure projects in their areas of influence. We are thus ensuring effective participation in the design of actions that promote their comprehensive development, with full respect for their self-determination.

The development initiatives of the United Nations deserve the combined skills and experiences of all

countries, because only together can we realize the goal of building a better future for all humankind. It is with abiding conviction that Mexicans continue to act with global responsibility within this international Organization, since it is the forum that best represents the diversity of nations and the shared aspiration to peace, development and prosperity for all the peoples of the world.

In Mexico, we are determined to build a true society of rights, in which all people, regardless of their ethnic origin, can exercise in their daily lives the rights and freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution and international treaties.

The President: I thank the President of the United Mexican States for his statement.

Pursuant to sub-paragraph 3 (b) of resolution 66/296, we will now hear statements by three representatives of indigenous peoples.

I now give the floor to Chief Oren Lyons, Chief of the Onondaga Nation Council of Chiefs.

Chief Oren Lyons: As we say in Onondagan, "Thank you for being well". And your answer, Mr. President, is "Yes, what you say is true." The responsibility for speaking on behalf of indigenous people has been given me again. I shall do the best that I can on their behalf.

I am so glad to see all the people here. It has been a long journey. I greet the Assembly with peace and friendship, and a question. How do you instruct 7 billion people as to their relationship with the Earth? Until they learn that relationship, we are imperilled as a species. That relationship is fundamental to our existence, and we have to understand that Nature is the authority and the final word. We are subject to every natural force in this world — water, for example, which is the first law of life.

We now have 7 billion people, soon to be 8 billion, soon to be 9 billion, and soon to be 10 billion. Our children are going to suffer the consequences of decisions that are made here today. The responsibility to future generations has been given to us; it was told to us many hundreds of years ago. We were set — we were advised — by the Great Peacemaker, when He said,

> "In your Council for the welfare of the people, think not of yourself nor your family nor even your generation. Make your decisions on behalf of seven generations hence".

Those layers and layers of humankind awaiting their turn on Earth will be determined; their fate will be determined by we who sit here today. I think that the current generation is the generation that is going to make the decision as to whether or not we survive as a species.

Today I bring participants greetings from indigenous people around the world. Let me repeat: we are the keepers of traditions, ceremonies, histories and the future of nations, and we are the ones who escaped your proselytization. We survived with the wisdom of the old ones. We are pleased to add our voices to others in the Assembly in this great effort for common sense and peace among nations.

I bring a most urgent message that was brought to our annual gathering of the Traditional Circle of Elders and Youth. This message was brought by a runner from the North, a traditional person from Greenland. He said: "The ice is melting". He informed us that years ago they had noticed trickles of water coming down the sheer face of Glacier Mountain, and that trickle has grown to a roaring river of ice water pouring out of the mountain into the Atlantic Ocean. Thousands of feet of ice have been lost, and it continues to melt at an accelerating pace. I remind the Assembly that the acceleration is what we are dealing with. The compounding effect is that we are now fully engaged.

In the Assembly, as leaders of the world, as a collective voice, we join this mission of peace. We add our presence in support of this great effort for reconciliation between peoples and nations. We agree that there must be parity and equity between rich and poor nations, between white people and people of colour, and rich people and poor people, with special attention to women, children and indigenous peoples. We, in our collective voices, add that there must be a reconciliation between peoples and the natural world, between nation States and the forests that sustain us, between corporations and the resources that they mine, the fish that they catch and the water that they use.

Indigenous nations and peoples believe in the spiritual powers of the universe. We believe in the ultimate power and authority and limitless energy beyond our comprehension. We believe in the order of the universe. We believe in the laws of creation and that all life is bound by these natural laws. We call this essence the spirit of life. This is what gives the world the energy to create and procreate and becomes the

ponderous and powerful law of regeneration — the law of the seed.

We, in our collective voices, speak to this to remind everyone that spirit and spiritual laws transcend generations. We know, because this has sustained us. Religion and spirituality are vital to survival and moral law. It is a faith that has sustained our human spirit through our darkest hours. It has sustained our human spirit in times of crisis during the times we suffered through the grinding measures of inexorable persecutions that have spanned generations and continue today. Yet here we are today, adding our voices to this plea for sanity in leadership and responsibility to the future generations whose faces are looking up from the Earth, each awaiting their time of life here.

The collective voices of indigenous people add that we are saddened by the absence of many of our brothers, not allowed to be in the Assembly today. However, we believe that reconciliation should begin at the United Nations because peace is an inclusive term. We include everyone, and peace and reconciliation is the purpose of this summit. Peace is dynamic and requires great effort of spirit and mind to attain unity. Leaders of peace must step forward and take responsibility for a paradigm change in the direction of current lifestyles and materialistic societies. The human species has become the most voracious and abusive consumer of Earth's resources. We have tipped the balance against our children and their future and we imperil all life.

Despite all of our declarations and all of our proclamations, no matter how profound they may be, the ice is melting in the North. We see the accelerations of the winds. We see the fires that are raging around the world, insects moving northward, the Lyme tick. We are dealing with all this. And we see that the sun's rays that provide us with light, energy and the very essence of life are now causing sickness among our people, blinding animals and killing the plankton of the sea. This is only the beginning and we are helpless already. We will now see the real power, the spiritual power of the Earth.

There can be no peace as long as we wage war upon our mother, the Earth. Responsible and courageous actions must be taken to realign ourselves with the great laws of nature. We must meet this crisis now, while we still have time. We offer these words as common peoples in support of peace, equity, justice and reconciliation. As we speak, the ice continues to melt in the North.

There is an addendum to this. I gave this speech 14 years ago in this very Hall. So, what have we learned? This effort for me to speak on behalf of the indigenous people, I thought, well, what will I write now? I said, I do not need to write. I just need to repeat what we said to the Assembly 14 years ago — precious years that we have lost. So I urge the Assembly, I urge Member States, to listen to our voice. We are the pulse of Mother Earth. We have experience and we have a lot of knowledge, so keep our languages. The United Nations might have to call on us again.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Aili Keshkitalo, President of the Sami Parliament of Norway.

Ms. Keshkitalo: It is indeed a great honour for me, as the President of the Sami Parliament of Norway, to address the General Assembly on this historic occasion today, the opening of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. It has been a long journey for all of us: from December 2010, when the General Assembly decided that the World Conference should be held, until today's actual opening of the World Conference. The arduous journey within the United Nations to promote and advance indigenous peoples' rights has been an inspirational one, and yet one that is grounded in pragmatism.

I sincerely thank all concerned who were involved in the process, particularly indigenous peoples in the seven indigenous regions, including the Indigenous Global Coordinating Group and Member States, for their tireless efforts, their wisdom and their collaborative spirit. We have had challenges in the process, including with regard to indigenous peoples' participation, due to reasons related to the rules of procedure and other matters.

Today, my thoughts also go to those indigenous representatives who played an instrumental role in the process but have since passed away. They were our siblings, our teachers, our parents and our friends. Their contributions lie deep in our hearts, and we pay respect to their memories. I am sure that their spirits are with us during these momentous days.

Indigenous peoples have been marginalized, discriminated against and ignored; but we have not lost heart, struggling for many decades until September 2007, when the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was finally adopted by this apex world body. It was a historic milestone and a triumph for justice and human dignity. The

challenge now remains to implement the provisions of the Declaration by closing the gap between theory and practice, between inspiration and reality, between commitment and implementation and between politics and good faith and sincerity.

Every single indigenous regional and thematic caucus has contributed to that process, drawing upon their respective struggles to halt the ongoing usurpation of our lands, territories and resources; eliminate discriminatory practices sometimes aimed at destroying our cultures; craft solutions to halt climate change in order to prevent the imposition of development models that destroy the life-giving capacities and integrity of Mother Earth; and maintain our identities, cultures and dignity and our social and political integrity.

One gathering in a small city in the traditional Sami territory within Norway became the epicentre of the indigenous peoples preparatory process — the Global Indigenous Preparatory Meeting, held in Alta in June 2013. It was a gathering attended by approximately 600 indigenous representatives from around the world, as well as some Governments — a gathering that my Parliament was honoured to host. The Alta conference was momentous. It was the culmination, the end result, of a process that started at local and national levels, then went regional and finally global. Indigenous peoples from around the world mobilized resources and support and unanimously agreed on their common priorities.

The city of Alta is significant. It is where many of the leaders of the Sami Kautokeino Rebellion of 1852 were sentenced to death and executed. It is also the birthplace of Norway's modern indigenous policy. The dispute about the hydroelectric development of the Alta-Kautokeino watercourse in the 1980s highlighted the need to clarify the State's relationship to Sami people, including our legal position. That was the start of a process that led to the State's recognition of the Sami as an indigenous people and the establishment of the Sami Parliament.

Indigenous peoples have been fighting for a very long time to be recognized as "peoples" under international law. As we know, article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (resolution 61/295) mirrors common article 1 of the two international human rights covenants of 1966. The right to self-determination is a fundamental right of all peoples, which includes the right of peoples to decide for themselves how they wish to engage with other peoples and with the international community. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes that indigenous peoples are free and equal to all other peoples and that they have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination. We are not there yet, but we are slowly moving in the right direction.

I welcome the fact that the outcome document of the World Conference recognizes the urgent need to ensure that indigenous peoples' representatives and their representative institutions are able to participate at the United Nations on issues affecting them. Indigenous peoples are ready to engage in discussions about how that can be achieved, and we look forward to studying the Secretary-General's report on this matter during the seventieth session of the General Assembly.

I believe that the process leading up to the World Conference has demonstrated that indigenous peoples make important contributions to the work of the United Nations. We are reliable partners that engage in the work of the United Nations, and we do so in good faith and expect the same in return from States and the United Nations. Make no mistake; indigenous peoples are here to help strengthen societies, by advancing our collective rights and the rights of our elders, women, youth, children and disabled. When humankind harnesses the potential of indigenous peoples, we will all be more harmonious, more successful and more just.

If there is anything all of us in this great Hall should learn from the past three years, it is that the relationship among indigenous peoples, Member States and the United Nations can be mutually respectful and beneficial when carried out in good faith and in the spirit of cooperation. Indigenous peoples have suffered — and still do — from historic injustice as the result of discrimination, colonization, invalid legal doctrines and dispossession of our lands, territories and resources, all of which has prevented us from fully exercising our rights, including our right to development in accordance with our own needs and aspirations. That is why we work so hard to advocate for our rights.

A Sami proverb says that "The night is not so long that the day never comes", which essentially means that all bad things will eventually come to an end. The adoption of the outcome document of the World Conference is a small but important step towards the dawn of the day of indigenous peoples. What we have not achieved in this process, we will pursue in the

future, at the national and international levels, with great determination in the spirit of cooperation.

We are committed to continuing to build a just and sustainable future for our coming generations. We shall advocate for what matters in the lives of our peoples, including by increasing our efforts to start a new chapter of international cooperation that recognizes and advances our rights, while fully respecting the rights of others. This is the time when we — States, indigenous peoples and other sectors of society — have no other, wiser choice but to continue to work together. This is the time when we must persist in realizing our common aspirations for human rights, justice, dignity, integrity, cultural identity and a better future for the entire world community.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Luis Evelis, Member of the Senate of Colombia.

Mr. Evelis (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to convey a very fraternal greeting to the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, Heads of State and Government, the various delegations and the indigenous peoples and their representatives at this Conference.

I also welcome the efforts of the United Nations to ensure a participatory process for all the peoples and bodies that were invited to build a document that would establish a plan of action designed to ensure the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (resolution 61/295). I also wish to highlight the work done by the Global Coordinating Group, particularly the important role played in that process by Ms. Mirna Cunningham and Mr. Les Malezer.

I thank the members of the Andean Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations for giving me the honour of participating in this Conference. I would also point out that the outcome document of this summit (resolution 69/2) is the result of an ongoing struggle of organizations and indigenous peoples and of their considerable ability to debate and come together. I therefore urge that we pursue this dialogue not only at the national level, but also at the international level and in the United Nations framework.

I recognize the progress made by and the willingness of certain States and Governments to incorporate into their national legislation all international instruments, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I also urge that all agreements reached and the outcome document be incorporated into and implemented through public programmes and policies and explicit budgets to ensure that the indigenous peoples of Latin America and the world can enjoy their rights.

I would also like to state that while it may be true that there has been important progress made in the United Nations, it is necessary to make the aspirations of indigenous peoples much more concrete and to adopt their paradigms for coexistence, peace, development and well-being. It must also be said that there are great lacunae that are cause for much concern. As certain United Nations agencies and other international organizations have noted, indigenous peoples continue to be the poorest of the poor, despite so much legislation and some very advanced constitutions in certain parts of the world.

Indigenous peoples suffer the greatest effects of climate change. They are also victims of and suffer from all the consequences of a development model that leads to illiteracy, poverty and hunger. In many parts of the world, above all in our region, indigenous peoples have the most limited access to quality health care and education. In some countries, indigenous peoples are threatened with physical and cultural extermination. We have also seen some States implement reforms to lower international standards with respect to indigenous rights, particularly regarding prior notice, self-determination and free, prior and informed consent.

We note that some sectors within indigenous groups are more vulnerable, including women, young people and children. We are also seeing an increased exodus of indigenous peoples to major cities, owing to a lack of opportunity in many countries. Against that background and recognizing the feelings of the Indian populations in some countries of the world, I want to suggest the following recommendations on behalf of the indigenous peoples of Latin America.

States should, after the outcome document contained in draft resolution A/69/L.1 has been adopted and on the basis of the Declaration and the international instruments on the subject, proceed to incorporate all the relevant instruments and adopt them in their national legislatures. That should lead to public policy initiatives that are inclusive as well as capable of distinguishing and attempting to resolve the gaps

that have been referred to by speakers and in the very valuable outcome document that we will approve today.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In addition, States in the United Nations system and the international community must listen to indigenous peoples and pay attention to their paradigms for development, because those peoples are well rooted in their relationship with Mother Earth and know that nature itself has rights. If we do not understand that, I would be pessimistic as to the future well-being not just of indigenous peoples, but also of all of humanity. We also recommend that we design different policies to deal with all of the difficulties of exclusion that the women, young people and children of indigenous communities suffer in all parts of the world. We need to make progress in terms of self-determination; free, prior and informed consent is necessary for any proposed action. It is important that we not just look for economic growth indicators in those States, but that growth also be reflected in living well, as the major indicator of overcoming poverty and of the well-being of indigenous peoples.

I would also like to recommend that the United Nations system continue to play an important role in building consensus when it comes to defining strategies, bringing together the international community, the private sector and multilateral sectors to address all situations of exclusion suffered by indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples within their organizations must themselves be encouraged to continue to fight and work to put forward proposals, because the future of humanity is not just the future of the powerful and of Governments; it is also a future that is in our hands. Together we have to save the planet. We all have the opportunity to achieve that; there is room for everyone.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with paragraph 3 (b) of resolution 66/296, I now give the floor to Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Mr. Al Hussein: It is a great honour for me to join the General Assembly today at the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. I see this as both a celebration and a call for action. We are here to celebrate the contributions that indigenous peoples make to our societies, as well as the progress that we have achieved towards the full recognition and respect for their rights, including through the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (resolution 61/295). But we are also here so that States can commit to stronger action to close the gaps in implementation, gaps that continue to diminish the impact of the Declaration and other human rights standards and so that we can take action to strengthen our fight against the discrimination, exclusion and land grabs that indigenous peoples still experience in all regions of the world. That action must demonstrate that our resolve to advance the rights of indigenous peoples is not simply rhetorical, but real.

A proverb of the Native American Hopi tribe states, "One finger cannot lift a pebble". It reminds us that alone, we can achieve very little — perhaps hardly anything of significance. So I am heartened by the strong and high-level engagement of numerous States and other parties in the preparations for this Conference and, in particular, by the very impressive commitment on the part of so many indigenous peoples. Their in-depth contributions, especially to the outcome document (A/67/994, annex) of the Global Indigenous Preparatory Conference in Alta, have been crucial. I very much hope that in the future the United Nations will open its doors even wider to accommodate the full participation of indigenous peoples.

Many representatives in the Hall today have travelled from remote corners of the world. Some of the beneficiaries of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples have travelled for up to seven days, taking several boats and flights to attend this event, in order to highlight the challenges their communities face, for many challenges remain. Seven years after the adoption of the Declaration, specific disaggregated data on indigenous peoples are lacking. But the harsh imprint of poverty and marginalization suffered by indigenous peoples is clearly visible in all the available statistics.

In developed countries, the percentage of indigenous people in prison is highly disproportionate to their numbers. In one country, indigenous children were 25 times more likely to be in detention than other children. In Latin America and the Caribbean, indigenous children are three times more likely than others to have no access to education, safe drinking water or housing. In Africa and Asia, indigenous young adults are more likely to be deprived of their right to education, especially if they are female. In the Arctic, the Pacific and South-East Asia, indigenous women are at greater risk of dying during pregnancy

or childbirth than women from other communities, and their newborns and young children are also more likely to die. Such stark statistics translate into thousands of human tragedies — thousands of violations of human rights.

This World Conference and its outcome document constitute the stepping stones that will bring our work on indigenous peoples' rights to a new level. And as we do so, we must also recall the past. Recently, I learned about a story that I found very moving. For centuries, an enormous rock that resembled a large, pale bison stood by the South Saskatchewan River in Canada. It was a sacred gathering place for indigenous peoples on the vast plains. But in 1966, in order to accommodate the construction of a dam and an artificial lake, that monumental rock was blown apart with dynamite. The waters rose and the jagged, broken pieces were covered in darkness. But last month, after a patient search, those pieces were found, deep under the waters. Once again, as their ancestors had done for generations, indigenous peoples could touch the remains of the rock and feel through it their connection to their past.

The rock could not be reconstituted; its pieces will remain under water. But the discovery will bring the rock's story to life. Generations to come will know where it is and what it has meant and continues to mean to their community. Through this story, I understand that what has been done is done. Often it has been bitterly unjust. But the indigenous peoples of the world have shown us their strength, persistence and depth of wisdom. They possess clarity and knowledge. Standing here together we can look forward and build societies based on partnership, mutual respect and human rights.

At this World Conference, I urge Member States to once again pledge to ensure that the human rights and dignity of all indigenous peoples are acknowledged and fully protected, in line with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I am confident that the draft outcome document of this Conference will be adopted and will provide strong human rights tools to promote the full application of the Declaration.

The constant and vigorous engagement of human rights mechanisms is vitally important. We must also make sure that indigenous peoples' rights are fully embedded in all other international initiatives that affect them. The new post-2015 sustainable development goals must be explicitly rooted in those rights, so that indigenous rights, lands and cultures can no longer be sacrificed in the name of skewed concepts of development. Indigenous peoples' concerns and recommendations will also be vital for tomorrow's Climate Summit and for the 2015 World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. Natural disasters and the effects of climate change are often borne by indigenous peoples — and those peoples may also hold the traditional knowledge that can help mitigate these disasters.

But, ultimately, the meaning and value of all the international processes can be measured only in terms of their real impact. The commitments that we make here and at other conferences must be followed up decisively at the national and local levels with resources and political will that match the ambitions expressed in speeches. It is easy to be brave from a distance, as the proverb says. We need real impact.

I look forward to seeing national action plans and strategies in line with the objectives of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, plans and strategies that include all of the Declaration's principles: self-determination; free, prior and informed consent; the rights of indigenous women; respect for treaty rights; the rights of indigenous persons with disabilities; and many more.

I call on States to develop such plans in full cooperation with indigenous peoples. There must be an immediate halt to the intimidation, persecution, violence and sometimes death that advocates for indigenous peoples continue to face in some countries when they take up the legitimate defence of their communities' rights and lands. All those who seek to cooperate with the United Nations in the field of human rights must be free to do so. I am also very concerned about reports that some indigenous representatives have been prevented from taking part in this conference. My Office, including its field presences, stands ready, together with our United Nations partners, to support the efforts of the international community and indigenous peoples, building on the work that we are already undertaking in close cooperation with Governments and indigenous peoples in all regions.

This World Conference has the potential to be a milestone in our quest to ensure full respect for the rights of indigenous peoples. I encourage all present to set out clear goals and renewed commitment, so that that quest can move forward.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with paragraph 3 (b) of resolution 66/296, I

now give the floor to Ms. Dalee Sambo Dorough, Chair of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Ms. Dorough (United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues): First, I want to acknowledge the Onondaga Nation, original inhabitants of this land, and thank them for the welcome on their territory once again. I would also like to echo the comments of concern made by the Presidents of Finland and Estonia and, just now, by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, concerning any and all actions to disallow indigenous peoples' participation in this gathering today. Hopefully, such actions will not continue in the future.

On behalf of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, I, too, want to welcome each of the participants to the United Nations and this significant two-day high-level plenary meeting — a meeting that should be considered important for all indigenous peoples across the globe. Since the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 66/296 and the initial discussions by the Government of Bolivia, the Forum has concerned itself with the full, effective and equal participation of indigenous peoples in the preparatory processes for this event. Many will agree that the preparations for this gathering had a very slow start, causing indigenous peoples, including those who serve voluntarily as expert members of the Forum, to become deeply concerned at the uncertainty that was generated by lack of concrete United Nations action.

However, since 2011, the Forum's expert members have generously provided space in the Forum's agenda in order to build a spirit of partnership, inclusiveness and respect between Member States, indigenous peoples and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. I believe that without the generosity of the Forum this process would not have taken the form or momentum that has collectively propelled us to this opening ceremony and our substantive programme for the afternoon and tomorrow. I genuinely hope this spirit of partnership continues at the regional and national levels, and, more importantly, at the indigenous community level.

Indigenous peoples have spent the past few decades building genuine cooperation with States in good faith, consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Moreover, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is a strong testament to what can be achieved when States and indigenous peoples strive together to uphold the Charter's purposes and principles and thereby strengthen the international human rights system as a whole.

At this moment, it is highly important for all of us not just to underscore the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, but also to be mindful of the pertinent international legal obligations of Member States in relation to all peoples, including indigenous peoples. Specifically, I would like to emphasize the peremptory norms of international law and in particular the principle of and right to self-determination, as affirmed in the Charter, the International Covenants, the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (resolution 2625 (XXV)) and, of course, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (resolution 61/295, annex).

Furthermore, I must stress that even though the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as a whole, is not an expression of customary international law,

> "some of its key provisions can reasonably be regarded as corresponding to established principles of general international law, therefore implying the existence of equivalent and parallel international obligations to [sic] which States are *bound* to comply with ...
>
> "The relevant areas of indigenous peoples' rights with respect to which the discourse on customary international law arises are self-determination, [the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples] autonomy or self-government, cultural rights and identity, land rights as well as reparation, redress and remedies."

In addition to the objectives of the hastily negotiated outcome document, contained in draft resolution A/69/L.1, with the limited and carefully controlled participation of indigenous peoples from around the globe, the peremptory norms of international law and customary international law principles remain essential and constant parameters for all future dialogue, negotiation and implementation of the individual and collective human rights of indigenous peoples. Furthermore, the articulation of the right to free, prior and informed consent, and the continuing importance of indigenous peoples' rights to their lands, territories and resources, remain urgent and necessary features for

the survival, sustainability and vitality of indigenous peoples, nations and communities.

For all future dialogue, at the local, national and especially international level, we must recognize that consensus loses its validity if it is used to undermine the principles of justice, democracy, respect for human rights, equality and non-discrimination, as well as good faith. Good governance becomes a casualty if a few States, or even one State, can undermine such essential rights and principles at the international level. We must recognize that indigenous peoples are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in the world. It is therefore a huge injustice if they are severely undermined by a highly questionable practice that allows the lowest common denominator to prevail.

In 1993, former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali underlined that "human rights constitute the common language of humanity". The human rights of indigenous peoples must not be politicized or otherwise undermined by local, regional and national State interests and agendas. They must rather be respected and recognized by local, regional and national Governments. These principles and human rights are universal. They do not stop at the borders between so-called developed and developing States. All States must consult and cooperate with indigenous peoples, consistent with their right to free, prior and informed consent, as well as related State international obligations, including those pertaining to human rights, the environment and sustainable and equitable development. This high-level plenary meeting should be remembered for its contribution through a principled outcome document — a document that must be interpreted against the backdrop of international law, customary international law principles and in particular the human rights affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In conclusion, I call on Member States, guided by a spirit of solidarity and partnership with indigenous peoples and consistent with their international legal obligations, as well as their political capacity, to provide support for effective implementation of the outcome document and its mutually agreed terms for cooperation within the framework of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Finally, let us ensure that we are guided not only by legal imperatives and international legal obligations but also by moral imperatives.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the opening session of the high-level meeting. I should now like to consult members with a view to giving the floor to the indigenous leader and Nobel laureate Ms. Rigoberta Menchú. If there is no objection, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly, and without setting a precedent, to invite Ms. Menchú to make a statement at this meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the decision just taken, I now give the floor to Ms. Menchú.

Ms. Menchú (*spoke in Spanish*): Today is a sacred day in the Mayan calendar, celebrating the seven energies of Ahau Ahpu. Ahpu is the strength of the human being, of every man and woman living on our planet. Ahpu reminds us that we are also children of oxygen and Mother Earth, and with that observation I begin my contribution to the General Assembly at its first high-level meeting on indigenous peoples. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for enabling the Assembly to host this meeting, and I hope it will culminate in the adoption of a draft resolution (A/69/L.1) that promotes the rights and dignity of indigenous peoples.

First, it was in 1923 that our brother Deskaheh travelled to the League of Nations to ask to be able to participate fully and actively within the organization. He did not succeed, but he set a precedent.

Many years ago, when I was 23, I had the good fortune to participate in the inaugural meeting of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, at which indigenous peoples began a strong petition within the United Nations. We are grateful to that Working Group, to which we pay tribute today, for having moved forward the debate on the rights of indigenous peoples. Since 1982, when the Working Group began its work, the United Nations has seen hundreds of thousands of delegations of men and women. As a result, we saw the establishment of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which led to the adoption of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), by the International Labour Organization. That gave rise to the participation of indigenous peoples at the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993, where a programme of action that provided for the establishment of the first International Decade of Indigenous Peoples. I recall all the aforementioned events because we, as indigenous peoples, remember

everything that we have been through, and the history of the world is reflected in our intensive efforts and the many United Nations resolutions.

Today, we are once again witnessing extraordinary progress, not only in the rights of indigenous peoples but also in the common language to define those rights. That is why we fully support the adoption of the draft resolution at this World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (A/69/L.1), which will once again strengthen not only our struggles but also, above all, the action plans for, on the one hand, indigenous peoples and, on the other, for nations or nation States. We would like to say that the progress made with regard to indigenous peoples has made it possible for many millions of indigenous peoples to reaffirm their identity, their rights and their existence.

Today, however, I speak on behalf of the young people, the children and those thousands of millions of our brothers who still suffer from hunger, poverty and malnutrition and the effects of the daily violence that they experience in their communities, villages and lands in order to protect their seas, rivers, waters and land. I am here because I believe that indigenous peoples and their young people and children have the right to a future. That is why we need once again to agree on the outcome document that we hope the General Assembly will adopt in a few minutes.

For us, peace means freedom, mutual respect, common interest and consultation. For us, peace is listening to the various views, because we are part of one diversity. As has already been noted, it is a great responsibility to speak on behalf of the indigenous peoples today. That is why I also appeal to all indigenous peoples and their leaders to ensure that they act with full responsibility and that, above all, we set as a priority the fundamental interests of our communities and our peoples.

We therefore have gathered today to celebrate such progress. We can see the future. We have success stories. That is why there is the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which has also been discussed for several decades. I would like to pay tribute to the hundreds of thousands of indigenous men and women who have lost their lives since the debate on their rights began in the United Nations in August 1982. Since that time, indigenous communities have suffered the most serious human rights violations, including genocide, ethnic crimes, fratricide and gender-based crimes. Those concepts are still not included in the draft resolution. However, we must set a precedent so that in the Assembly we can strengthen the observance and monitoring of international mechanisms, above all, those that, together with members and the peoples of the world, we have established and adopted.

Uncertainty still prevails among our peoples in the area of health, because health is essential for all humankind. However, for indigenous peoples in particular, health means their overall well-being and does not relate only to pain and suffering in one part of the body. We must include the existing technologies of indigenous peoples in comprehensive development plans. It is essential to incorporate the science and knowledge of indigenous peoples in the area of education. Today, we need to adopt a new approach to education in a multicultural context, not merely an education that reproduces the paradigms of colonialism or subjugation. We need to combat racism and discrimination head on, because racism and discrimination are emotional habits and mental ills that undermine the integrity of the human being. We must also strengthen our legitimate, full, active and focused participation in programmes of work that are relevant to us, both within the bodies of the United Nations and in public policies at the national level.

We congratulate our brothers and sisters who first courageously came to speak to the international community. They denounced crimes against humanity. They made it clear that humankind breathes the oxygen of our Mother Earth. Without them, our overall well-being would have been completely undermined.

During the 34 years that I have had the good fortune to be connected with the United Nations, I have seen not only developments but also frustration, since the greatest problems can be found among the millions of indigenous people living in mountainous areas and in communities that are still not connected by roads. They still have access only to a small amount of information, not the technology that humankind talks about today.

We peoples, like all peoples who have suffered from slavery and subjection, are like all men and women who have suffered violence against their own flesh. Nevertheless, they have the strength to shine a light and share it with others. If indigenous peoples are able to achieve their freedom and, above all, their self-determination, then all international norms will lead to dignified policies at the national level. It is not possible to understand indigenous rights if you do not see them as being part of the daily life of our populations. That

is why this is a new opportunity for us to open common space for reciprocity, mutual respect, the fullness of life and the future of all of humankind.

I see a lot of young faces here. These young people greatly inspire us. They come from the various nations of the world, and they include many young leaders. I pay tribute to Mexico, which has gone to great lengths to promote the draft resolution that we are going to adopt, but I would also pay tribute to our brother Evo Morales, who leads the Plurinational State of Bolivia and very many other fights that, in years past, when we were younger, seemed to be impossible to fight. I also pay tribute to the young people in the various diplomatic missions here at the United Nations. When I walked through the United Nations corridors with a police escort, a lot of those present here were a lot younger than they are now.

I am a Nobel Peace Prize laureate. I was the first Ambassador of the first International Year of Indigenous Peoples in 1993, I was appointed by the Secretary-General at the time, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and he gave me the opportunity to visit the 29 nations of the world where indigenous people live. Today I see them represented here, and I am very proud of that fact, because I can see that the way is open. We have to build it together. Peace is life. Peace is education and peace is culture.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/69/L.1. I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Gettu (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): In connection with draft resolution A/69/L.1, entitled "Outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples", I wish to put on record the following statement of financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Under the terms of paragraphs 31 and 40 of draft resolutions A/69/L.1, the General Assembly would, first, request the Secretary-General, in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples, the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues and Member States, to begin the development, within existing resources, of a system-wide action plan to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the Declaration and to report to the General Assembly at its seventieth session, through the Economic and Social Council, on progress made.

Secondly, it would request the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Inter-Agency Support Group and Member States, and taking into account the views expressed by the indigenous people, to report to the General Assembly at its seventieth session on the implementation of the draft resolution and present options to the General Assembly at its seventieth session, through the Economic and Social Council, including recommendations regarding, first, using modified and improved existing United Nations mechanisms to achieve the aims of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People; secondly, ways to enhance a coherent, system-wide approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and thirdly, concrete proposals to enable the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions, building on the Secretary-General's report on ways and means of promoting participation in the United Nations of indigenous peoples' representatives on the issues affecting them (A/HRC/21/24).

The requested activities referred to in the draft resolution related to paragraph 1 of the biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2014-2015 (A/67/6/Rev.1) and section 2 of the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, "General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management".

Pursuant to paragraphs 31 and 40 of the draft resolution, the request for documentation would constitute an addition to the documentation workloads of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of two pre-session documents of 8,500 words each in all six languages. This would entail additional requirements in the amount of $100,800 for documentation service in 2015. As additional conference- servicing requirement of $100,800 for 2015 under section 2, "General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management", would be required under the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 to implement the additional workload. No provision has been made in the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 for the implementation of the activities requested under paragraphs 31 and 40 of the draft resolution. At the current stage, it is not possible to identify

activities within the section of the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the biennium. It is therefore necessary that additional resources in the amount of $100,800 be provided through an additional appropriation for the biennium 2014-2015.

It may be recalled that, under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 and 42/211, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget for those years. If additional expenditures were proposed that exceeded the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned will be implemented only through the redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or the modification of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities would have to be deferred to later in the biennium.

Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/69/L.1, it is estimated that an additional appropriation of $101,800 would be required. It is anticipated that this requirement cannot be met from within the resources of the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015. Accordingly, the General Assembly is requested to approve an additional appropriation representing a charge against the contingency fund in the amount of $101,800 under section 2, "General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs and Conference Management," in the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

The attention of the General Assembly is therefore drawn to the present statement of programme budget implications. During the main part of the sixty-ninth session, the Fifth Committee will examine both a detailed statement of the programme budget implications arising from the draft resolution and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions thereon.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.1, entitled "Outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples". May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.1?

Draft resolution A/69/L.1 was adopted (resolution 69/2).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See for a statement.

Monsignor Urbanczyk (Holy See): First, I wish to congratulate the President on convening this high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. My delegation has worked hard in a constructive way and in a spirit of goodwill to make the outcome document (resolution 69/2) a success. On the other hand, my delegation would be remiss in its duty if it did not point out areas where it strongly disagrees with the text. In that regard, my delegation wishes to make the following reservations on paragraph 13 of the resolution.

With reference to sexual and reproductive health and so-called reproductive rights and other language on which the Holy See registered reservations at the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and at the Fourth World Conference on Women, we reiterate these reservations as set out more fully in the report of the ICPD and in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In particular, the ICPD rejects recourse to abortion for family planning and denies that it creates any new rights in this regard. My delegation will continue to respect and promote the rights of the indigenous peoples.

Finally, my delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate the long-standing commitment of the Holy See to promoting the integral development of the more than 370 million indigenous people in the world.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to express my sincere thanks to Ms. Marjon Kamara, Permanent Representative of Liberia, and Mr. Andrej Logar, Permanent Representative of Slovenia, who so ably and patiently conducted the discussions and complex negotiations in the informal consultations in order to bring them to a successful conclusion. I am sure that members of the Assembly join me in extending our sincere appreciation.

Representatives are reminded that the first and second interactive round tables will be held concurrently this afternoon at 3 p.m. in Conference Room 4 in the General Assembly Building and the Trusteeship Council Chamber, respectively.

Interactive round table 1, entitled "United Nations system action to implement the rights of indigenous peoples", will be co-chaired by Her Excellency

Mrs. Edita Hrdá, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the United Nations, and Mr. Ghazali Ohorella, Representative of the Pacific Indigenous Region.

Interactive round table 2, entitled "Implementing the rights of indigenous peoples at the national and local level", will be co-chaired by His Excellency Mr. David Choquehuanca, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and Mr. Joseph Ole Simmel, Representative of the African Indigenous Region.

The third interactive round table and the interactive panel discussion will be held concurrently tomorrow afternoon at 3 p.m. in the North Lawn Building in Conference Room 4 and the General Assembly Hall, respectively.

Interactive round table 3, entitled "Indigenous peoples' lands, territories and resources", will be co-chaired by His Excellency Mr. Pita Sharples, Minister of Maori Affairs of New Zealand, and Ms. Joan Carling, Representative of the Asia Indigenous Region.

The interactive panel discussion entitled "Indigenous priorities for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda" will be co-chaired by Ms. Patricia Balbuena, Vice-Minister for Interculturality of Peru, and Ms. Jannie Lasimbang, Representative of the Asia Indigenous Region.

I wish participants profitable discussions.

I would like to express special thanks — I think we all do — to two people: Ms. Mirna Cunningham and Mr. Les Malezer, who have been at the service of this historic meeting. They have been at the service of all representatives of indigenous peoples. Once again, I wish participants very profitable discussions.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

United Nations A/69/PV.5

General Assembly
Sixty-ninth session

Official Records

5th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 23 September 2014, 5 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

In the absence of the President, Ms. Phipps (United States), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m.

World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

Agenda item 65 (*continued*)

Rights of indigenous peoples

High-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General.

The Deputy Secretary-General: I am Jan Eliasson. I am the Deputy Secretary-General, and I send warm greetings from Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who has been closely following the historic World Conference on Indigenous People, together with me and all our colleagues. We welcome representatives warmly to New York to this important meeting.

The first three words of the Charter of the United Nations, which I always carry in my pocket, is "We the peoples". And even if we are an organization of States working under intergovernmental rules, we must never forget that we are here to serve the peoples — peoples who deserve peace, development, human rights, the rule of law and a life of dignity.

I have followed the fates of indigenous peoples throughout my life and my career, and I am extremely happy to see their representatives in this Hall. It was a bumpy ride to get to this Conference, but now the representatives are assembled here, and I am very glad that they have succeeded in coming together on an outcome document (resolution 69/2) that sets the direction ahead.

But the work has just begun. We have a long way to go, and we should hurry up on that road. We hope that when representatives go back to their home countries and environments and to all their friends at home, they will carry the torch and take with them the best of this meeting and of the common experiences that representatives have shared. I think this meeting offers a huge possibility for networking, allowing representatives to also see the collective strength of reaching out to their colleagues and friends in other parts of the world. I want representatives to know that we are their partners, that we want to stand up for every human being's equal value in the world, and that they have been left behind for far too long.

I will now move on to my formal speech. That was my introduction. I am very glad to be in this Hall at this moment. I am also very grateful that representatives could hear my remarks now because I have a number of other meetings. As representatives know, we have a meeting of huge importance for them — the climate meeting. And I am going back to it after this introduction.

This Conference builds on the work done and the results achieved since the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples seven years ago.

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That Declaration is our foundation and guiding star. The Conference outcome document is our inspiration and path ahead. Working together, indigenous peoples and Member States have identified important priorities and necessary actions on issues such as land, resources, justice systems, education, health and development — areas that affect the daily life of all the people concerned.

I am very much a human rights advocate, and human rights are at the core of our efforts. I am especially pleased that the outcome document focuses on indigenous women, youth and persons with disabilities. I commend all representatives for their tireless work and for finalizing this very positive and forward-looking text. I am from Sweden. I once worked for a Prime Minister who said that every society should be judged by how it deals with the most vulnerable and exposed of its peoples, as that is how one can gauge the quality of life of a society. We should keep this in mind.

Today, I hope, we will celebrate the achievements of this unprecedented Conference. But we will also be remembering that, globally, indigenous peoples continue to lag behind in terms of education, health, employment and, sadly, even life expectancy, as statistics can prove. The Secretary-General and I intend to deal with those problems by building on the momentum representatives have generated already, for which we are extremely grateful. We can sense the momentum in this Hall, what the representatives have given to the city of New York, and the fact that this meeting at the United Nations coincides with so many other meetings bringing world leaders to this city and this country.

We want to engage the indigenous peoples even more actively across the United Nations system. The United Nations is now in the middle of identifying, as many representatives know, our global development priorities beyond 2015. We are now in the end phase of the Millennium Development Goals era, and we have approximately 450 days left to achieve those eight Goals. Sadly enough, we will not achieve several of the Goals. We will now identify the new set of goals. It is essential, in my view, that the issues of indigenous peoples are part of the new agenda. That agenda should support their broader aspirations and those of representatives for sustainable development, in line with their rights and priorities.

The future we want values and seeks to preserve diversity. The future we want requires more equitable and sustainable use of the world's resources. We need to be at peace with nature. I have mediated in conflicts, I have been in humanitarian crisis situations, but what I really would like to do is to attend a negotiation on peace with nature. It is difficult, though, to see who will sit on the other side of the table. I am sure many of the representatives in this Hall could represent the side of nature in the negotiations. Finally, the future we want is one where all indigenous peoples realize their human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 should be obligatory reading in every school around the world. It opens up both the beauty of the individual's political and civil rights and also economic and social rights.

In closing, the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples shows what we can do when we unite, not only as Member States, but also as "We the peoples". Nobody can do everything, but everybody can do something. Let us never forget that. And let us remember that the United Nations is a reflection of two realities. The United Nations is a reflection of the world as it is, and it is not a pretty place. We have conflicts. We have inequalities. We have poverty. We have violations of human rights.

So that is one reality — the world as it is. But the United Nations is also a reflection of the world as it should be, and our job is, for all of us in this room and for all of us who serve this Organization and who serve the peoples of the world, to diminish the gap between the world as it is and the world as it should be. We will not be able to bridge the gap, unfortunately — let us be realistic — but we can diminish it, even if only by an inch. Again, everybody can do something.

Now it is our collective responsibility, as Member States, indigenous peoples, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, civil society, the private sector and the academic world, to transform the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (resolution 61/295) into reality. That requires determination, tenacity, the appropriate legal framework, human and institutional capacities, and, finally, political will. As the Assembly heard Al Gore say this morning, political will is a renewable resource. We can renew, strengthen and even double the political will that is needed.

Participants here today are the catalysts, bearers and witnesses of this process, and I count on them, as partners with the United Nations, to deal with a better future for all in this world. We need to work for a life of dignity for all. A life of dignity for all is the theme of

the Secretary-General's report on the post-2015 process (A/68/202), and we should keep that in mind. I thank them all for their attention, their work and the work that they will do. We are in this together. Let us go to work.

The Acting President: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his statement.

As previously announced, the Assembly will now hear presentations by the co-chairs of interactive round table discussions 1, 2 and 3 and the interactive panel discussion.

I give the floor to Mr. Ghazali Ohorella, representative of the Pacific indigenous region and co-chair of interactive round table discussion 1.

Mr. Ohorella: Yesterday we were served with a delicious discourse provided by States, indigenous peoples and United Nations agencies, programmes and funds. It was a luau feast of liberation and freedom.

In the Pacific, we know that one can paddle over great distances when many paddles are moving together. If we continue in this spirit, our work will no longer seem impossible but, as I said in my opening statement, rather inevitable. I had the pleasure of co-chairing the session with Mrs. Edita Hrdá, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic, with a panel that consisted of Ms. Victoria Tauli Corpuz, Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; Mr. Atencio López, representative of the Central and South American and Caribbean region; and Mr. Kanayo Nwanze, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development as keynote speakers, with a large number of indigenous participants, United Nations agencies and Member States.

A consistent refrain during the discussion was that the new collective consciousness can close the chasm and ensure that indigenous peoples do not slip through the cracks at the United Nations. Various participants underlined that the World Conference on indigenous Peoples and its outcome document (resolution 69/2) marked a milestone for the United Nations system's work with indigenous peoples on issues that affect them. There was broad consensus that, with the adoption of the World Conference's outcome document, the time has come for the United Nations system to move from normative discussions on indigenous peoples' issues to action and the integration of indigenous peoples in the United Nations work at all levels.

Participants also stressed the importance of indigenous peoples' full and equal participation in the United Nations system. They provided examples of how this could be done through, first, ensuring indigenous peoples' participation in various decision-making governance structures at the local, national, regional and international levels; secondly, recognizing indigenous peoples' governments and high-level officials by providing adequate United Nations status; and, thirdly, ensuring that there are United Nations staff members with indigenous backgrounds.

In line with the outcome document, several speakers called for the appointment of a senior indigenous United Nations official at the level of Under-Secretary-General to oversee the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (resolution 61/295) and to raise awareness of indigenous peoples' issues within the United Nations system and beyond.

A key focus of several speakers was the United Nations system's work on indigenous peoples at the regional and national levels. The participants heard examples of how regional and national United Nations mechanisms, including the regional commissions and the United Nations country teams, can ensure that indigenous peoples are part of the development and strategizing of programmes and activities in a structured and coherent manner, including in the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, and by using the United Nations Development Group's "Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues" and ensuring the availability of relevant disaggregated data.

Numerous speakers also committed to fully supporting a system-wide action plan to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the Declaration, and we look forward to the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly at its seventieth session.

Recommendations were made on establishing the oversight mechanism as a monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the Declaration. Some speakers called for the establishment of a new United Nations mechanism tasked with overseeing the Declaration's implementation, while others referred to updating existing ones and strengthening the work of the United Nations treaty bodies on indigenous peoples' issues.

The call to strengthen the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues was another key point of discussion. Speakers alluded to the need for the Support Group to become more effective through more

frequent meetings with higher-level United Nations officials.

We recognize a new era of empowerment and engagement, moving beyond what is wrong to what we want for our world as we work together. We are already walking forward towards ensuring our fundamental freedoms, and we recognize the wisdom of calling for indigenous ambassadors. We welcome the presence and participation of the newly appointed United States Ambassador to the Human Rights Council and Cherokee native, Mr. Keith Harper.

It is clear that when indigenous peoples hold their lands in their own hands, this will lead to a realization of their rights. Indigenous peoples must be the protagonists of their own development processes and responsible for the measurement of their own progress. Indigenous peoples are the canary in the coal mine of the world. We are the mercury in the barometer of the successes and failures of the United Nations. The round table offered us a map to the stars where we can realize the dreams of our ancestors. In fact, we see the pledges and promises as providing action. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's closing words yesterday morning were: "You will always have a home at the United Nations".

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. David Choquehuanca Céspedes, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and co-chair of interactive round table discussion 2.

Mr. Choquehuanca Céspedes (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I greet the Assembly today by saying "Jayaya", which, in Quechua, means "To life!"

I am sorry for the delay in this wrap-up meeting. Indeed, we should learn from our indigenous brothers and sisters that when a lawyer makes an appointment with an indigenous woman at 3 p.m., she will show up at 2.45 p.m., and the lawyer will show up at 4 p.m. We should learn something from our indigenous brothers and sisters.

I am going to present a summary of the work of round table 2 on the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples at the national and local levels. Round table 2 was held on Monday, 22 September 2014, from 3 to 6 p.m. The round table focused on the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples at the national and local levels.

In their presentations, several States reaffirmed their support for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Many participants also welcomed the final document and made note of the specific commitments regarding the measures to be adopted by States and the United Nations to strengthen the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples at the national and local levels.

At the same time, some participants raised the concern that some issues were not reflected in the final document. Both Member States and indigenous representatives stated that there had been progress at the national level in the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples, including the recognition of indigenous peoples and their rights in national constitutions, laws, policies and programmes. The identified examples covered a number of rights, including the rights to self-determination and autonomy, lands, territories and natural resources, consultation and free, prior and informed consent, education and indigenous languages, health, rights-based treaties and reconciliation. Examples of positive measures varied among States.

While many notable advances were identified, participants also addressed the current challenges in the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples across a range of issues and rights. Comments focused on how to overcome the ongoing challenges. Several speakers referred to the need for an ongoing dialogue between Governments and indigenous peoples. In that regard, it was noted that the participation of indigenous peoples in parliaments and other political bodies has been substantial, but that much remains to be done to strengthen such participation at the national and local levels. Member States and indigenous representatives also referred to the importance of the development of action plans and policies relating to indigenous peoples and noted that the commitment in the final document in that respect is a positive step.

Several participants referred to the need for wider awareness among governmental actors, media and society in general in order to change discriminatory attitudes and prejudices against indigenous peoples in the societies in which they live. Those are obstacles to the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples. The issue of violence against women and girls and the need for concerted action by States and the United Nations to address it was also highlighted by several participants.

Beyond the action and the current challenges at national and local levels, participants in the round table also addressed the role of the United Nations system in promoting the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples and the measures which could taken to strengthen their implementation. The provisions of the final document referring to the participation of indigenous representatives in the United Nations were noted with appreciation by the Member States and indigenous representatives. In addition, several participants noted paragraphs of the final document as to the measures to use, modify and improve the mechanisms of the United Nations in order to achieve the purposes of the Declaration.

In conclusion, I would ask that we all — representatives of States, representatives of indigenous peoples, indigenous leaders, political leaders who are participating in this important meeting — bring our energy to the task of ensuring that the rights of indigenous peoples are implemented and, if possible, strengthened, and ensuring that the United Nations works hard towards this end. Each of us has positive energy that can be used for this purpose.. I am going to repeat,

(*spoke in Quechua*)

Jayaya!

(*spoke in Spanish*)

I would like all of us — because each one of us has energy — to push collectively for what the United Nations, our States and our indigenous leaders are doing. We must join with them and support them — and not crush their action. We must support it and push for it. I say once again "Jayaya" because it means "to life". Everything that indigenous people are doing is for life, brothers and sisters. Life comes first — everyone's life, not just the life of human beings, but of everything that exists in Pachamama, our Mother Earth. "Jayaya, brothers and sisters!"

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Ms. Jannie Lasimbang, representative of the Asia Indigenous Region and Chair of the interactive panel discussion.

Ms. Lasimbang: I have the honour of presenting a short summary of the panel discussion on indigenous priorities for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda which I co-chaired with Ms. Patricia Balbuena, Vice-Minister for Interculturality of Peru. We had three panel speakers, Mr. Wo Hongbo, from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Ms. Saudata Aboubacrine, representative of the African Indigenous Region, and Mr. Albert Deterville, from the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Despite our long list of speakers, we managed to hear from almost all of them in the panel discussion, thanks to their sticking to the three-minute time limit.

I will be brief. I am just going to present some bullet points on the discussion and the conclusions that we have reached.

Among the important aspects that are necessary with respect to indigenous peoples and their priorities in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda is to secure the adequate inclusion of the rights of indigenous peoples in the post-2015 development agenda. The rights enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples should be the basis for their inclusion. Indigenous peoples should participate actively in the development of policies and programmes and in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda at the national and international levels. Specific indicators on indigenous peoples should be included in that agenda. It is not enough to simply add them to the list of vulnerable groups.

In order to achieve sustainable development, it is imperative to be respectful of indigenous peoples' development according to their own aspirations and to be respectful of their cultures and identities. The post-2015 development agenda should also reflect what Member States agreed at this World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, in particular what we have committed to in the outcome document (resolution 69/2), that is, respect for the rights of indigenous peoples, including indigenous knowledge to sustain the environment and to combat climate change.

It is also very important to recognize the rights to lands, territories and resources, the right to self-determination and the principle of free, prior and informed consent as some of the main pillars for achieving sustainable development for indigenous peoples. The participation of indigenous youth, women and persons with disabilities should be guaranteed in any process related to development, and the human-rights-based approach to development should be incorporated in the post-2015 development agenda.

Other points were brought up by the speakers, including the need to develop specific indicators

on indigenous peoples' well-being in the post-2015 development agenda. Some speakers pointed out that the data with respect to indigenous peoples shows that they are lagging behind in many aspects and that it is necessary to take action to improve their situation. Development should therefore be according to their own aspirations and needs.

Another point made was that there cannot be development if indigenous peoples' rights are not included. It is difficult to talk about the development of indigenous peoples if, on a daily basis, they become victims of displacement from their lands and their territories.

Those brief and salient points summarize what was discussed during our panel discussion.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Ms. Joan Carling, representative of the Asia Indigenous Region and co-chair of interactive round table discussion 3.

Ms. Carling: First of all, I feel privileged to have co-chaired round table 3 with Mr. Pita Sharples of New Zealand. During round table 3, on the theme of indigenous peoples' lands, territories and resources, representatives made statements on the following subjects.

First, indigenous peoples have a close relationship with their lands, territories and resources. It constitutes the heart of their collective survival and development and is linked to the survival of their identity and spiritual and cultural well-being. Indigenous peoples' relationship to their lands, territories and resources is outlined in various articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (resolution 61/295) and in various paragraphs of the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (resolution 69/2). However, speakers pointed out that there is a lack of recognition of indigenous peoples' lands, territories and resources and a lack of recognition of indigenous peoples in general.

The second point concerns the action of States and United Nations agencies. Some States have legally recognized indigenous peoples' collective land rights and have taken measures to protect sacred sites and heritage areas. There are also efforts to provide compensation for lands, territories and resources taken away from indigenous peoples.

The third point has to do with the implementation of United Nations agencies' programmes that address indigenous peoples' sustainable resource management of lands, territories and resources and food resources and with the enhancement of biodiversity and food security. Those lands, territories and resources are threatened. Indigenous peoples have now reached a tipping point in their continuing collective survival as distinct peoples, along with their distinct identities and cultural heritage, due to dispossession, destruction, militarization and continuing threats to their lands, territories and resources.

Colonization has affected indigenous peoples' guardianship of their lands, territories and resources. For many decades, those issues have been the primary and most urgent concern for indigenous peoples. In many instances, national laws allow for the occupation of indigenous peoples' lands, territories and resources, and that has led to forced evictions, land-grabbing, concession permits for timber plantations and mining and other extractive industries and the delineation of national parks and protected areas without the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples. The continuing violation of the principle of free, prior and informed consent in relation to lands, territories and resources is causing more poverty, marginalization and conflicts.

Finally, there is the call for action. First, there must be legal security for the lands, territories and resources of indigenous peoples as a precondition to achieving sustainable development, and that includes the protection of their traditional occupations, livelihoods and sustainable resource management systems. Partnerships are needed between indigenous peoples and Governments at the global and national levels. The principle of free, prior and informed consent must be immediately implemented, on the basis of the Declaration and the World Conference outcome document. There must be compensation and redress for lands illegally taken from indigenous peoples and regulation of corporations that are violating indigenous peoples' rights to their lands, territories and resources.

States are called upon to immediately establish independent and impartial processes to adjudicate and advance indigenous peoples' rights over their lands, territories, waters and natural resources, as reflected in the outcome document. States were called upon to take measures, including legislative measures, to implement the rights enshrined in the Declaration. There is an

urgent need to protect the remaining traditional grazing lands, hunting grounds, fishing waters, including coastal waters, and gathering areas, and to give priority to laws pertaining to lands, waters, territories and resources. The same recommendation applies to the commitment to develop and implement national action plans aimed at implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Acting President: I should now like to consult members with a view to giving the floor to Mr. Setareki Macanawai, Indigenous Disabilities Representative. If there is no objection, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly, and without setting a precedent, to invite Mr. Setareki Macanawai, Indigenous Disabilities Representative, to make a statement at this meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In accordance with the decision just taken, I now give the floor to Mr. Macanawai.

Mr. Macanawai: I am speaking today on behalf of the Indigenous Persons with Disabilities Global Network and the Global Disability Caucus, a Network representing indigenous persons with disabilities from all seven geopolitical regions of the indigenous peoples. At this juncture I wish to thank the President of the General Assembly for the opportunity to address this forum to be the voice of the voiceless.

Those of us who have been at the margins of society for a long time have been excluded and forgotten at the closing this historic conference. Indigenous persons with disabilities face multiple types of discrimination and barriers to participation in society, including with regard to access to development programmes and funding, education, employment, health care communication and transport services. As indigenous persons with disabilities, we are overrepresented among those living in absolute poverty, and we continue to exist as one of the world's most vulnerable populations.

It is for that reason that we, both the Global Disabilities Network and the Global Disability Caucus, applaud Member States for adopting the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous People (resolution 69/2), which includes vital references to indigenous persons with disabilities in paragraphs 9, 10 and 18. The inclusion of indigenous persons with disabilities in legislation programmes, disaggregation of data by disability status and a commitment to the elimination of violence and discrimination are key challenges faced by us indigenous people with disabilities today. The participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities should be central to policymaking, programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation of mechanisms addressing the rights of indigenous people.

Only an inclusive and empowered society will ensure that no one is left behind. The commitment by Member States, enshrined in the outcome document, to ensure that national legislative forces and institutional structures relating to indigenous peoples are inclusive of indigenous persons with disabilities is indeed a strong step forward and in the right direction in recognizing and promoting those rights. The development of the rights of indigenous persons with disabilities means that decisions are not taken without our full consultation and participation through our representative organizations. That development must also be in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

I would like to stress again the importance of a stand-alone paragraph on indigenous persons with disabilities in the outcome document. I call for the disaggregation of data on disability status, which is currently recognized in the work leading to the post-2015 development agenda. In the new development agenda, in the new world that we are building, indigenous people and persons with disabilities must be included. To ensure that and to guarantee that we are not left behind once again, the future development goals, targets and indicators must be inclusive of indigenous peoples and indigenous persons with disabilities.

I close with the words of Desmond Tutu: "My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together."

The Acting President: I will now read out a statement on behalf of His Excellency Sam Kahamba Kutesa, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

> "As we come to the closing meeting of the historic World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, I am heartened to note the critical successes of this Conference, which would not have been possible without the inclusive way in which indigenous peoples of the world and Member States approached these discussions.

"At the outset, I would like to extend my deep appreciation to all Conference participants for their valuable contributions, including Heads of State and Government, Member State delegations, indigenous elders, representatives of tribal governments and indigenous organizations, United Nations system representatives and civil society. Without your active engagement and commitment to this endeavour, the Conference surely would not have yielded such positive results.

"Yesterday's adoption by the General Assembly of the outcome document (resolution 69/2) signified a new chapter in the ongoing dialogue and engagement between indigenous peoples and Member States. It will serve as a guiding document going forward, building on the commitments the international community previously made in the foundation document, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

"There have been many outcomes from United Nations conferences, but this document is unique because of the inclusive way in which indigenous peoples and Member States turned their shared goals into a reality. Indigenous peoples insisted on such an inclusive process from the very beginning, and thanks to our collective efforts, we successfully met that aspiration. It was this inclusive approach that has made this Conference a success.

"The outcome document represents a balance between what indigenous peoples sought as further commitments towards more effective realization of their rights and what Member States could agree upon. I am convinced that its action-oriented provisions, when implemented, will bring about sweeping changes for current and future generations of indigenous peoples.

"The outcome document accords importance to national actions plans and to a system-wide action plan for greater coherence within the United Nations system. The document also focuses on the rights of indigenous women and addresses the intractable problem of violence against women, which must be at the top of the agenda. The document speaks eloquently to the challenges faced by indigenous youth, the difficulty in sustaining indigenous languages, the need to preserve indigenous knowledge and the requirement to ensure sustainable livelihoods. All those issues form the core of the broad and integrated agenda which indigenous people have called for over the last two decades.

"In the round-table discussions, speakers stressed the vital importance of implementing the provisions of the Declaration. Let me echo that call to action. Within the framework of the emerging development paradigm, Member States, the United Nations system, civil society and the private sector must join in a collective endeavour to make a difference for indigenous peoples worldwide.

"I wish to thank the four advisers to the President who facilitated this conference. The unwavering commitment and determination shown by Ambassador Andrej Logar of Slovenia, Ambassador Marjon Kamara of Liberia, and the two indigenous advisers, Mr. Les Malezer and Ms. Mirna Cunningham, were exemplary. As we conclude this Conference here today, I urge each and every one of you to do your part to keep the momentum of our discussions moving forward in a positive and productive manner. The signing of the outcome document is a pivotal moment for our work and should stand as a beacon of our renewed commitment to ensuring the inclusion of indigenous issues in the future work of the United Nations."

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Pita Sharples, Minister of Maori Affairs of New Zealand, who will deliver the closing prayer for this high-level meeting.

Mr. Sharples (New Zealand): I should note that I have just resigned from the New Zealand Government as Minister of Maori Affairs, so this is probably my last official act as Minister, but perhaps I can come back next year to do the prayer.

To all those who were present at the meetings I co-chaired, and whom I asked to hurry up, stop speaking and all those things, I promise I will take less than three minutes. Let us pray.

We thank you for your presence and your blessings upon us throughout this Conference. It is now with some humility that we ask for your guidance to advance this venture, to protect and promote the rights of indigenous persons within their respective nations to confront their challenges and meet those who would put barriers in their way. Where there is darkness, bring light; where there is ignorance, bring understanding; where there is arrogance, bring humility, so that indigenous persons can walk free and tall in their own cultural norms, and

participate fully in the life of their nations. And as we return home, we ask for your blessings so that we may be happily reunited with our families awaiting us.

The Acting President: The high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples is now ended. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 65.

The meeting rose at 6.55 p.m.